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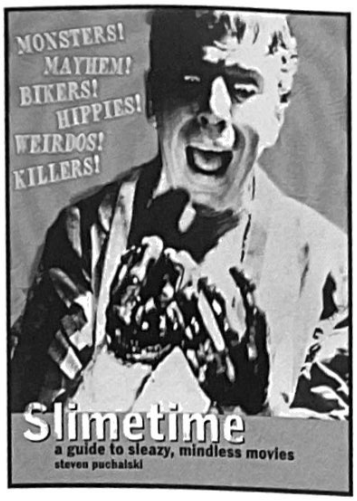
SLIMETIME

A GUIDE TO SLEAZY, MINDLESS MOVIES

by Steven Puchalski
with Tavis Riker, Brian J. Edwards and Steve Shapiro



Published between October '86 and June '89, SLIMETIME was a sickly-green newsletter that reviewed the tops in cult film dementia, arthouse weirdness, drive-in dreck, and seriously warped movies from around the world. It's all here! Sci-fi, schlock, women-in-prison, Japanese monsters, brazen gals, mindless men, kung fu mischief, flower power, and bad music!

This new edition unleashes the best, funniest, nastiest, and most opinionated reviews from that '80s 'zine. Containing over 500 reviews and a trio of lengthy genre essays (Blaxploitation, Biker movies and Hallucinogenic cinema), this fully updated & revised **384 page** edition contains over **150 new reviews** — many from the first three, long-out-of-print issues of SHOCK CINEMA, and others never seen before — in addition to loads of new graphics and old ad slicks.

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"The ultimate, no bullshit guide to the strangest films on the planet."
- ULTRA VIOLENT magazine

"Puchalski's keen observations and sharp wit cut right to the bone in a fast, furious, achingly funny style... Highly recommended."
- FANGORIA

"This exhaustive collection of hilarious indie/schlock reviews is still one of the best books *ever*."
- JANE MAGAZINE

Welcome to our very first summer edition of SHOCK CINEMA. Pulling together another issue — in between our usual April and October doses — wasn't easy, but it's finally here and I'd like to begin by thanking all of our writers for another outstanding batch of contributions. In the review department, we have our typically eclectic array, ranging from '70s drive-in sewage to arthouse dementia from around the globe. We also have a slew of terrific interviews. **Michael Paré** burst upon the cinema scene in EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS, and for the last 20 years has lent his easy-going charisma to films like Walter Hill's STREETS OF FIRE, John Carpenter's VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED, Roland Emmerich's MOON 44, THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT, and many more... **Brad Dourif** has worked for acclaimed directors such as Peter Jackson, John Huston, Milos Forman, and David Lynch, with memorable supporting roles in a wide range of big-budget fare. This recently Emmy-nominated actor (for HBO's DEADWOOD) has energized everything from cheesy horror romps to independent arthouse gems... **Ted Raimi** might've began his career as Sam's younger brother, but over the years he's become a scene-stealing favorite with cult movie fans, due to oddball roles in LUNATICS: A LOVE STORY, XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS, SKINNER, CANDYMAN, and SEAQUEST DSV... Any fan of '70s exploitation cinema is familiar with **Rosanne Katon**, thanks to outings such as CHESTY ANDERSON US NAVY, LUNCH WAGON, THE MUTHERS and THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS. In this fascinating interview she discusses Playboy Playmate fame, her career as one of the top '70s drive-in starlets, as well as her present-day charitable activities... Director **Bob Clark** is best known for his '80s hits PORKY'S and A CHRISTMAS STORY, but this Q&A focuses primarily on early horror efforts such as BLACK CHRISTMAS and CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS (in addition to a sidebar interview with his old colleague, **Alan Ormsby**).

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

On a personal note, during the last few months I've had the harsh truth of human mortality repeatedly shoved into my face. Just as the April SC hit the newsstands, I was saddened by the demise of character actor extraordinaire Victor Argo, who was interviewed by Richard Harlan Smith back in SC#18. The following weeks only became more depressing, with serious health issues endangering the lives of both my family and old friends. But death is most shocking when it occurs in the most unlikely places, such as the untimely passing of Barry Long. In the early-'90s, when I was the manager of the St. Marks Kim's Video (the long-defunct cool location on the corner of 2nd Ave., not their crappy 'superstore'), Barry was one of my assistants. We worked together almost every day, drank together during off-hours, and although we didn't always see eye-to-eye, we were friends. Years before Hong Kong cinema was assimilated by Hollywood, Barry was also one of its strongest proponents. He obsessively stocked Kim's shelves with HK titles — reaching far beyond the usual Woo action-fodder and into realms that few US film buffs were even aware of at that time — while turning thousands of customers onto these remarkable films. Barry later penned an article on contemporary HK cinema for SC#6 and in 1997 collaborated with Fredric Dannen on the Miramax book *Hong Kong Babylon*. After I bolted from Kim's in '95, the two of us sporadically stayed in touch, and the last time we talked, Barry spoke of his desire to begin writing again and invited me out for a few beers. Regrettably, my schedule was packed and I promised him "some other time." In late-May 2004, I learned that Barry entered the hospital for a knee infection, and died several days later after possible complications with his medication. As my sympathies went out to his family and loved ones, one simple thought became crystal clear. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in stupid little problems that we forget life is all too brief and that we should — as Warren Zevon put it — "enjoy every sandwich." 7/20/04

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The ad deadline for SC#26 is **Sept. 10, 2004** and space is limited. **All checks MUST be made payable to Steven Puchalski.** All ads should be supplied as camera-ready art, or TIFF or JPEG digital formats, and must fit within our guidelines: NO porn, gratuitous nudity or hawking your shitty home-made videos. Ad rates are:

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Note: ALL potential review materials MUST arrive before September 1, 2004.

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Special thanks: Peter Burmeister, Mark Johnston, Mike White, Mike Vraney, Lisa Petrucci, Tony Pradlik, Sam McAbee, Michael Gingold, Kevin Clement, Phil Hall, plus everyone who sent in stuff to review.

Cover photos: [top] **MICHAEL PARÉ** in **STREETS OF FIRE.**
[bottom] **TED RAIMI** in **SPIDER-MAN 2**
(Photo by Melissa Moseley).

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TED THE MIGHTY: An Interview With TED RAIMI

By NICANOR LORETI

Ted is so much more than Sam Raimi's younger brother. Although he began by appearing in his brother's films (DARKMAN, EVIL DEAD II, SPIDER-MAN, et cetera) he's had an interesting career of his own, working for people like Wes Craven in SHOCKER (1989) and Ivan Nagy (who many of you might remember as Heidi Fleiss' boyfriend) in the low-budget gore-fest SKINNER (1995), along with Traci Lords and Ricki Lake. Ted appeared in CANDYMAN (1992), the two Tom Clancy adaptations PATRIOT GAMES (1992) and CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER (1994), and even Bob Kurtzman's WISHMASTER (1997). He also had great roles in the television-shows XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS and SEAQUEST DSV, produced by Steven Spielberg. But his most amazing turn was in Josh Becker's crazy little gem, LUNATICS: A LOVE STORY (1991). Ted's tour de force performance as an agoraphobic in love is the one to remember. He's a horror fan who truly loves the genre and is happy to be a character actor, working alongside his idols.

This year, you can spot him playing Hoffman in his brother's SPIDER-MAN 2 and you can look forward to seeing him in Takashi Shimizu's "Americanization" of his own JU-ON: THE GRUDGE, co-starring Sarah Michelle Gellar and Bill Pullman. He's also ready to start shooting THE MAN WITH THE SCREAMING BRAIN, directed by and co-starring longtime friend (and former baby sitter) Bruce Campbell. But the one thing that makes him totally cool is that he was a guest star on an episode of one of the best TV-shows of all time: ALF. 'Nuff said. Ted Raimi is a very funny and friendly guy, as this interview quickly proves.

SHOCK CINEMA: When did you decide that you wanted to be an actor?
Ted Raimi: In high school. The only good thing about high school was the fact that I discovered I wanted to be an actor. But other than that, I hated it.

SC: Did you and your brother go to the same school?
Raimi: We did, but we missed each other by a couple of years. He's six years older than me. I went to a bunch of schools, and I think my favorite school was college at the University of Detroit. That was close to the greatest theater education I've ever had in my life. It was fantastic and they really treated me well at that school.

SC: But you first started acting in your brother's short films, right?
Raimi: That's right, I started when I was about nine years old. He started when he was fifteen, and I was about nine, and he called me whenever he needed someone to be in the background or to run around and help out. I was lucky, because most fifteen year old kids don't want their nine year old brothers hanging around with them, but Sam was different than those. I got lucky that I got to hang out with him and, fortunately, the rest of his pals like Bruce Campbell, Josh Becker and Scott Spiegel. All those guys didn't mind me being around them, so I got very lucky.

SC: Which one of those short films do you like the most? I've seen some of them, like IT'S MURDER or WITHIN THE WOODS...
Raimi: Of all of them, I think WITHIN THE WOODS is the most complete looking movie that's got a storyline that works really well and is actually pretty scary. That one I believe was made as sort of a test to see if those guys could make a horror film. It was for investors only. It was made to show to people and say, *"Here's what we're capable of, give us money."* There were some earlier films that I thought were pretty funny, they were usually comedies with names taken from feature films.

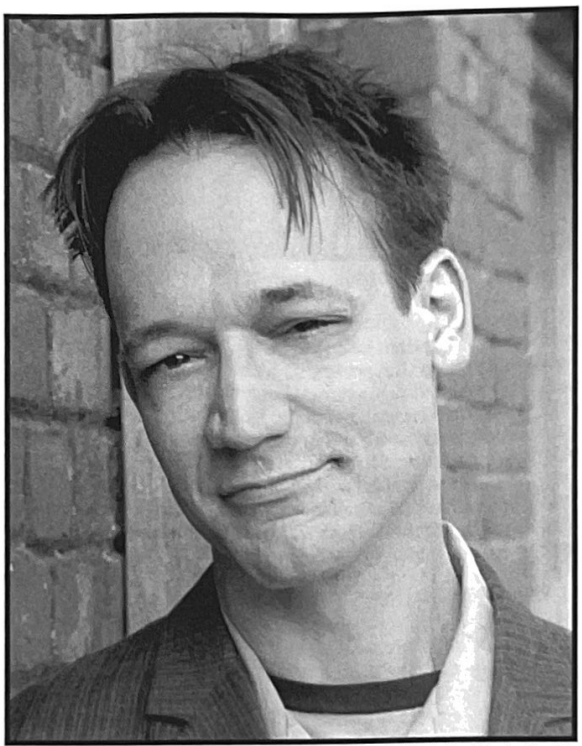


Photo by Nicole Quaid

SC: I love the one about the lawnmower that goes berserk and chases people.
Raimi: Oh, yeah! I'm in that one. It's called TORO! TORO! TORO! That was a gag on TORA! TORA! TORA!, the World War II movie. That was fun. That was all shot around Detroit and its suburbs.

SC: Were all of them shot in 8mm?
Raimi: Yes, they were all shot in 8mm. Those were the days before video. Those were the mid-'70s and I think video was already there but you had to be really rich to be able to afford anything like that. I think it was in its earlier, earlier stages, but no consumers were able to get to it.

SC: What do you remember about making THE EVIL DEAD (1981)?
Raimi: Well, I was twelve back then, and I remember going to work on it later, when I was like thirteen or fourteen and traveling to Tennessee to help my brother make his movie. I remember just going to visit him but I ended up helping him, because there were some of the actors coming and going or just leaving, and I ended up being the craft service guy that brings them coffee and stuff like that. (laughs) And I also did stuff in the movie, like being arms and legs of several characters. If you remember the hands grabbing Bruce Campbell's face, or being crashed in the floor, well that's me. If I remember right, I think I really hurt him.

SC: I want to ask you about STRYKER'S WAR [a.k.a. THOU SHALT NOT KILL... EXCEPT] (1987) because I love your character in that movie. (laughs)
Raimi: I think you're one of the two or three hundred people that ever got to see that movie.

SC: Oh, c'mon. I know at least ten people who saw it here in Argentina.
Raimi: Oh, you do?

SC: Yeah, I have friends who are fans of that film!
Raimi: That's the funniest thing! (laughs) I think that's cool. That movie was shot over the course of two or three weeks. Josh Becker directed it. He went on to do some of my favorite XENA episodes.

SC: And LUNATICS: A LOVE STORY.
Raimi: That's right. STRYKER'S WAR was a lot of fun. It was an absurd idea, a great idea and Josh did a great job with it. It was a really low, low budget film. I enjoyed doing it. It should have been a B-movie in the '70s, with the war veterans and all that stuff.

SC: It was something like "the Vietnam vets vs. Charles Manson"...
Raimi: And Charles Manson was played by my brother Sam. When I did it I think I was like fifteen years old.

SC: Whose idea was it to have your character with all those chains around him?
Raimi: It was Josh's idea. He was like the "Chain Man." It was a very crazy thing, but funny though.

SC: When you did EVIL DEAD II (1987), it was like a "bigger" version of the first movie. What was it like making that one?
Raimi: Yeah, the budget on that one was bigger. I believe it was like five [million], but it could have been more. Still, up from a million, that's a big deal. There were more things we could do, everything was union and everything was 35mm, so it was a big thing. That movie got me my SAG card, because I was the only one stupid enough to agree to put that suit on. We shot that in North

Carolina and we used an enormous gymnasium located in this abandoned high school, and all of the interiors were shot in there. It was like 100 degrees in the gym, and I was in this gigantic rubber suit, which added another 10 to 15 degrees. So they had to bring an oxygen mask for me to breathe because otherwise I would pass out. It was unbelievably difficult but I was 20 when I did that. If I did it today I would die. I wouldn't last twenty minutes, but when you're twenty years old, you know...There are so many fans out there that love that movie.

SC: How much time did you spend inside that suit?

Raimi: Oh, God, a lot! I think I was in North Carolina for three and a half weeks and I spent two weeks inside that costume. I got in that costume thirteen times and I think I lost about 15 pounds. That's like a pound a day. Without exercising, that's a lot. Last week, Bruce Campbell reminded me of this story about that shooting. There was a big party one night, it was at Bob Kurtzman and Greg Nicotero's house. They worked on the movie with Mark Shostrom. They invited me over to the house and I had just spent a whole day in that thing (laughs), and when I get there it's like 8:20 and everybody is there. I got to the party, I didn't get anything to drink, I was so exhausted and tired that the last thing I remember doing was crawling behind the couch to take a little nap, because I couldn't stand up. And the next thing I knew it was morning! During the whole party, nobody knew where I was, they thought I went home, but I was sleeping behind the couch. (laughs)

Ted Raimi and Renee O'Connor in XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

SC: You also had a part in INTRUDER (1988), the first Scott Spiegel movie.

Raimi: Those days I was doing a play in Detroit in college and I had to fly to California in the middle of doing the play to be in Scott's movie, and then I flew right back. I remember shooting late at night at the grocery store and it was my first introduction to Los Angeles. I had never been to LA before that and the first thing I saw was this kind of creepy weird part of the valley. It was 2 o'clock in the morning and we were in this abandoned grocery store shooting the movie, so I thought LA is awful! This place is worse than Detroit! (laughs)

SC: What's it like working with people you've known your whole life, like Josh, Scott or Bruce Campbell?

Raimi: It's great, actually...Because when you are new to any film set it usually takes about two days to see what that director wants from you. What kind of style he wants from you, is the director a funny guy or not? It takes a couple of days until you have it figured out. And that's what's so great about working with all these people, because I've known them since I was eight or nine years old. I know exactly what they want, and it's great to work together. It's a lot like band members who've been together for years. It's a great sense that if you fall, you'll get picked up right after you fell.

SC: After working with your brother and old friends, how long did it take until other people started calling you for their own films?

Raimi: That was a long process that really hasn't quite finished yet. The first things I did that can be considered mainstream were industrial films back in Detroit. When I was doing those I think I was nineteen, and I wasn't going to college. I was living at home, so I didn't have any rent to pay and I was making all this money, so I thought it was the greatest thing in the world.

But the first movie I ever got outside my brother's realm was Wes Craven's SHOCKER. It was shot in '88 and came out in '89. That happened pretty much as soon as I got to LA. That was a big deal for me because when I did it I was a big Wes Craven fan, so walking into his office to read for him was hard. I couldn't speak because I was so nervous. I was only three weeks in Hollywood and already reading for Wes Craven. It was a little odd for me but I found him to be the kind of a guy who really likes actors. There are some horror directors who think actors are secondary to the horror itself. Wes was not like that at all. He was very interested in the mechanics and how you had to go from this point in a scene to this other point in a scene. It was a very good experience, and I think it was Peter Berg's first movie too. He was a cool guy. I think he was like 27 at the time and I was 23.

SC: I like that movie pretty much...

Raimi: Me too! I think that what happened was that they wanted another franchise like the NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET series. And SHOCKER was not that kind of film. I think it's very unique and of all of Wes Craven's movies I think it's the most Wes Craven-ish other than SCREAM or LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT, because that one was more of a commentary movie and less of a horror movie. It was closer to SCREAM, because it's commenting on TV and the way we handle violence in television. It was an earlier look at that.

SC: And Mitch Pileggi is great in it.

Raimi: That's true, yeah. His career did well. I think he did THE X-FILES right after that. I didn't hear him talking about SHOCKER very much after we finished it.

SC: Did you expect your career to go somewhere when you were younger?

Raimi: I always hoped I would be doing what I'm doing now. What I really enjoy is playing character parts. I think they're usually better developed because writers usually enjoy writing character parts. Also, your hours are shorter and you're the guy who gets to do everything to the main guy! You're the one! And there's nothing wrong with that. So I hope that I'll still be doing what I'm doing twenty, thirty years from now. It's been a great ride.

I didn't think I'd do any television. That came as a surprise. I thought my life was gonna be all movies and I ended up doing ten years of TV. When I got to Hollywood I did a couple of TV shows but I thought those were just anomalies. But then I did SEAQUEST, that was three years, and then I did XENA, and that was like six years. Those were like nine years, but I was very happy with that.

SC: Well, you had cool characters on both shows.

Raimi: Oh, thank you. I got lucky and it was fun. [On SEAQUEST] I remember sitting in that chair they put me in for three years and thinking how much I would like to be the adventurer who got to be on location running around and all that stuff, instead of me on the bridge going, "OK, Lieutenant Ortiz, here are the coordinates." (laughs) I always wanted to get to do what they did and I never got to, but then I got my "you have to be careful what you wish for," because in XENA all I did was run around. I didn't sit down for five minutes, so of course I stopped thinking it was so exciting. Running around all day, every day made me think, "Oh, man. I wish I could sit down again, this is exhausting!" (laughs)

But I had a great time on XENA. Those were some of the most fun years of my acting life so far. And it was the greatest show to be in because I got to be with actors who really liked to stretch and do absurd things. When I got in the show, I hadn't seen it before and I just came from experiences that when pretty girls are on the show it's all about the makeup and the clothes and it's about who has more lines...I'm not putting actresses down by any means but sometimes it can be a beauty contest. That can be exhausting to the other actors. But this was so much fun. Lucy Lawless and Renee O'Connor were so not that, they were into stretching the bound of what is acceptable for a woman to do on TV. They had a taste for the absurd. That was cool.

SC: How much of yourself did you inject into the Joxer character?

Raimi: Ha ha, that's a good one! Joxer was like Ted times ten. I mean, I certainly have my moments, but normally I'm a reclusive quiet kind of a guy. That's not like Joxer at all, not very much like him. But I think I'm like him in a way that I am very clumsy. I trip over things and my mind is usually somewhere it shouldn't be. I don't like to be in a fight to prove anything, but since I'm six feet tall and 180 pounds nobody messes with me when I go out anyway.

SC: Is it true that you co-wrote Joxer the Mighty's song?

Raimi: It is true, I co wrote it with Josh Becker. We

were working on an episode called "For Him the Bells Toll," and there was a scene where Renee O'Connor and I were chained up in this kind of dungeon place. We didn't really know what to do and Josh was crazy trying to figure something out. And he said, *"Why don't you sing a song to her that you made up about yourself? That would really drive her crazy!"* I thought that was the funniest idea. Josh came up with the first lyrics, then I came up with the rest and he liked it. That's how that came around and then I've had to sing it at every fan convention in the history of fan conventions. They put it in every episode after that.

SC: You can even download it from the internet.

Raimi: Yeah, that's pretty funny.

SC: Irvin Kershner directed you in the SEAQUEST (1993) pilot, right?

Raimi: Yes, he did. That was really cool. He cast me, and let me tell you, I have Irvin to thank for my TV career. At first I wasn't even reading for O'Neill, I was reading for another part. But right before I left Irvin made me read for O'Neill, I did and then I got the part. It was unusual, because normally when you do TV, you have to read two or three times before you get the part. He's a great director who's been out there for so many years. I mean, there's nothing wrong with the guy that directed THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, the best Star Wars movie to date. Irvin is just great with actors. George Lucas is good at telling stories, but he's not half as good at directing actors.

SC: You had a great scene in CANDYMAN, along with this girl.

Raimi: Yeah, her name was Marianna Elliott. She's been in a few things after that. She's a great actress, and I had a great time working with her. That was the second time I worked with Bernard Rose. Before he did that movie he directed these sexy comedy shorts for the Playboy Channel and I was in one of them called MOTIVATION. I played a very silly actor who thinks he's been driven out to the desert to do Shakespeare, but this girl I'm with doesn't understand what I'm talking about and when we get there I realize I was just brought up there to do a porno. It's very funny. It's still out there, I don't know who has it but I'd like to see it again. So Bernard asked me to be in CANDYMAN. I was really embarrassed because I had to feel Marianna up. So I had to ask her before every take if it was OK for me to do it. She had to give me permission to do it, because otherwise I would never do the scene.

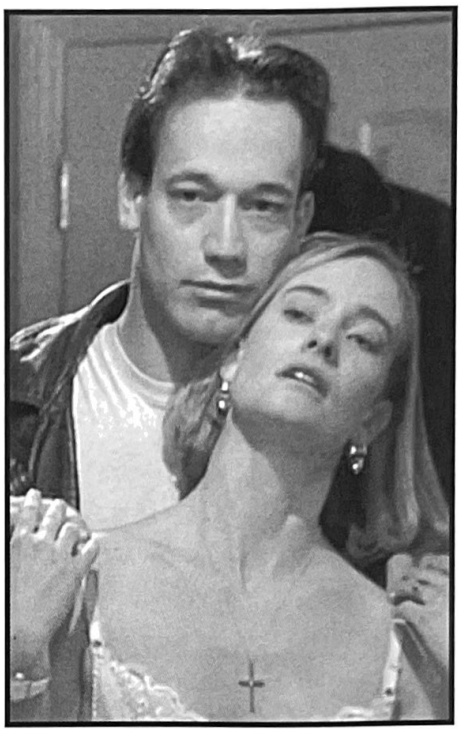
SC: Had you read anything by Clive Barker before you did the movie?

Raimi: I did read this anthology called *The Books of Blood*. They were pretty frightening. I like his short stories a lot. I like his books too.

SC: You did this strange movie called SKINNER. Tell me about that experience, because it's a very dark film starring Traci Lords and Ricki Lake.

Raimi: It's really creepy but it was fun to do because I really liked working with Ricki and I especially liked working with Traci. She was great, and years later I ran into her at a sci-fi and horror festival and we chatted about it and laughed. We shot that in LA over the course of like three weeks and what I remember most about that movie was that the director, Ivan Nagy, had a bizarre background. He did a good job. For a low budget little horror film, it's pretty good. Really grizzly though. It offended so many people, this movie. I got so much mail you wouldn't believe it. (laughs) People were saying things like, *"It's such a disgusting movie! There's no point to it! Putting on a black guy's skin and then imitating him...that was the most offensive thing I've ever seen in my life!"* But I loved the fact that people reacted like that. It means we did something right.

Right after we finished the movie, the Heidi Fleiss scandal was exposed. And the hilarious thing was that Ivan Nagy was Heidi Fleiss' pimp. I didn't know it at the time. If you look at the movie, there are all these actresses that are pretending to be hookers... Well, when you have these kind of girls in a movie, they're usually curious, because they want to be in the movie business too. But none of these girls were curious at all, and that was because they were really hookers! I didn't know it until the movie was over. Some people were just horrified, but I just thought it was really funny.



Ted & Marianna Elliott in CANDYMAN

SC: Traci Lords was pretty good in that film.

Raimi: Yeah, totally. At that point, Traci was not in the porn business anymore. But those other girls were all into it. They weren't even in the porn business, they were plain old fashioned hookers. Most directors call for hookers *after* the shooting is done, but these were here *before* shooting started. (laughs)

Raimi in his EVIL DEAD 2 make-up, with Mark Shostrom

SC: Tell me about LUNATICS: A LOVE STORY, which was also directed by Josh, and co-starred Bruce Campbell and Deborah Foreman (VALLEY GIRL).

Raimi: I had a fantastic time shooting that movie. We shot it in Detroit and I was like 22, I think. I didn't have a place to stay in Detroit, so I was living at home. We were shooting at night, I would sleep during the day, so I remember my dad would make me dinner and then I would go to work. It was a great experience and I was really, really lucky to be in that movie. To this day, that is my favorite movie I've ever been in. Not because I starred in it, but because it has such a good story, the structure is pretty good and even though I was pretty young at that time, I like what I did in it. I think I could have a made a couple of different choices, but when I see it today, I still like it. I'm very happy about it. Usually movies of that era that I was in, I can't stand to look at them, but I think I'm pretty good in LUNATICS and Josh did great work. It's one of his best.

SC: It's really funny, too.

Raimi: It had such great dialogue, the lines are amazing. I remember when we were at Sitges, Spain, in the film festival showing the movie. The theater was packed and people starting walking out one by one because they couldn't understand what was going on. They were just residents, so most of them didn't speak English...It's like watching SEX, LIES AND VIDEOTAPE and not being able to understand the dialogue. It wouldn't make any sense at all, you wouldn't care.

I thought Debbie was great in it. I remember that when we were shooting, Bruce Campbell, who was also the producer, when he was not acting, he would go into the office, sit there for another three or four hours just doing paperwork. He worked a lot during that movie. I remember feeling that we were making something really unique. Those were the last days when you could release a movie without testing it. I think it's more of a Josh Becker movie more than my movie or Bruce's movie.

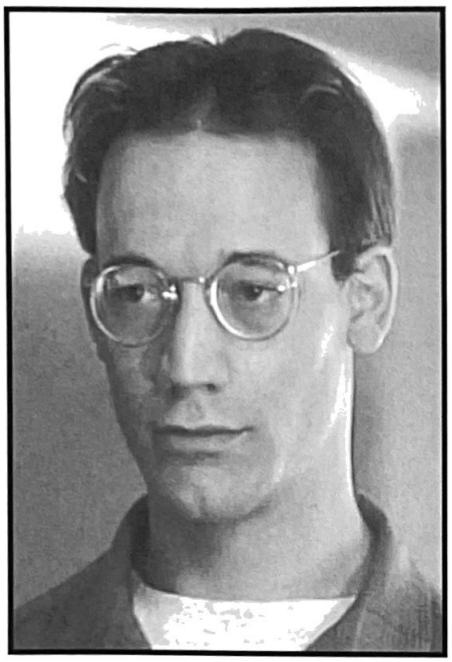
SC: Who is the rap band that appears in the film?

Raimi: They are one of Detroit, Michigan's oldest rap bands. At that point they had been around for ten years and are called Detroit's Most Wanted, and the rap they sing was written by Josh Becker. Most of the people that auditioned for the part wouldn't do it like Josh wanted, but when these guys came in they just said, *"Oh, yeah, we can do this."* Josh listened to them and just said,

"You're hired." I was concerned that they hadn't acted before but they were really funny.

SC: I was very surprised when I saw you in PATRIOT GAMES.
Raimi: It was a small part. Some of my parts are like that, but I don't care about that, you know? If you remember me from it, and I was OK, that's the end of that. That's my job.

SC: And you got to act with Harrison Ford.
Raimi: I did get to act with Harrison Ford, that's right. He was a really cool guy. I remember him being very precise speaking and very much an actor's kind of an actor. He was a pleasure to work with. I remember sitting next to him — I was just out of school — and I remember watching him and I was thinking, "God, this is the best theater education I've ever had in my life!"



Ted Raimi in SKINNER

SC: And you also did the sequel, CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER. Philip Noyce directed both. What was it like working with him, because I met him and he's a very funny guy.
Raimi: He's very funny, he's very ozzy. I think he's from Australia. He was very nice. During that movie, though he was so busy because there was so much difficult stuff that I think he was kind of preoccupied. So I did not get to talk to him very much, but he was a really nice man.

SC: You also had a small part in MANIAC COP 3: BADGE OF SILENCE (1993).
Raimi: Oh, God, I can't believe you pulled that one out! (laughs) I met an old girlfriend on that film. She was not an actress, she was working as William Lustig's assistant, we became good friends and then we dated for a while. It was fun, and then I did another William Lustig movie, uncredited. I was driving from LA to Florida to do another season of SEAQUEST and this girl, Amy, invited me over to Tennessee, where she was working on this Bill Lustig movie. I stuck around for a couple of days and shot this film.

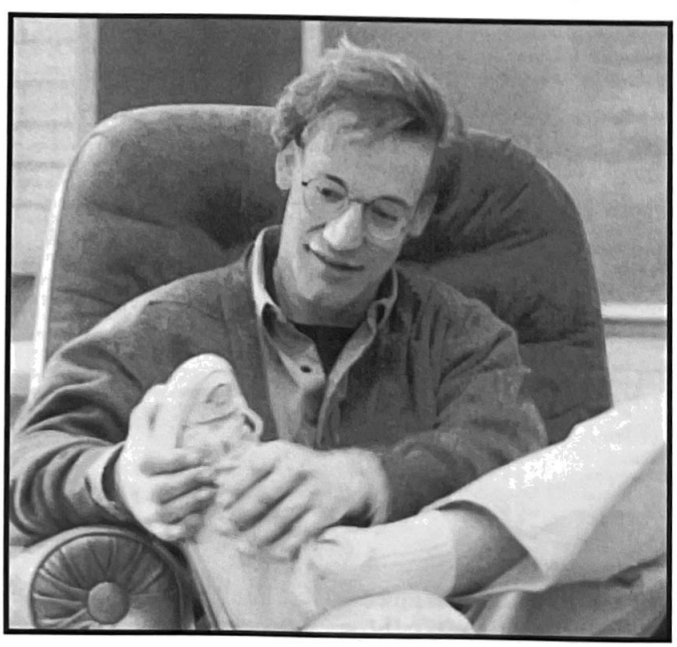
SC: I know William did not finish MANIAC COP 3. Do you know why?
Raimi: I have no idea. He was the director while I was there. I know he left, but don't know why. It was a good franchise though.

SC: You also were in an episode of ALF.
Raimi: I forgot the name of the episode, but I played the owner of a mortuary and Andrea Elson, who was the pretty girl from the show, she gets stuck with me as her date for one night. It was a lot of fun.

SC: Did you get to meet Alf?
Raimi: Yeah, I did. When I was doing the read through, there was a guy who was reading for the guy who did the puppet. And then when he introduced himself, he had Alf's voice. (laughs) He said, *"Hi, how are you?"* and I said, "Oh, my God. He sounds like Alf!"

SC: What about that episode of TWIN PEAKS you were in, playing "Rusty, Heavy Metal Youth"? Did you enjoy that experience?
Raimi: Yes. It was a very actor-friendly atmosphere on that set. I remember working with Kenneth Welsh who played WIndom Earle. He was a very generous actor and gave me a lot to work with. That show's style really inspired my acting. I noticed how none of the actors were reprimanded for being themselves and being outrageous in the choices they were making. After I did that show I would always say to myself when the director would scold me for some weird choice I made, "Whatever the director may think of me, I know this style I'm acting in will appeal to SOMEbody." So it was educational, to say the least.

SC: You also did THE ATTIC EXPEDITIONS (2001), with Jeffrey Combs and Seth Green.
Raimi: Yeah, I did spend time with Seth but all of my scenes were with Jeff Combs. I loved working with him, and he's a great actor. The way I got cast in that movie is interesting. Jeremy Kasdan, who wrote it and directed it was the assistant editor on SKINNER. He watched SKINNER a lot and years later he called me and asked me if I wanted to be in his movie. We shot it here in LA during three weeks and it ended up being kind of a cool little movie. I think for a low budget horror movie it had a great scene, when the main character wakes up in the middle of his brain operation. It was fun, I played a doctor and Jeff Combs played a doctor.



SC: Just like in RE-ANIMATOR.
Raimi: Yeah, here I'm the good guy and he's the bad guy. Just like that. Jeff is like an actor's actor. I remember asking him once why everybody liked his character in RE-ANIMATOR so much and he gave me a great answer. He said, *"Because he doesn't compromise. Everyone likes a character that doesn't compromise. Nobody can get in his way."* In a good movie, bad guys are bad guys but they think they are doing good. But nobody sits behind a desk and goes "hu-huh-haha!" (laughs)

SC: Only George Bush. (big laugh)
Raimi: Only George Bush! That's a good one!

SC: What's your approach to acting in a film like THE GRUDGE, when you already know the original version?
Raimi: Well, I'm not a method actor. It drives me crazy acting with method actors. I just try to figure out what needs to be done and do the best job I can. I think I'm an absurd kind of an actor. I like to take absurd choices. [Director] Takashi would laugh every time I was done with a scene. I did some funny stuff that he liked, so he kept them in. I'm probably gonna be the oddball in the cast, because everyone else is a really big actor, like Bill Pullman and Sarah Gellar. I enjoyed the hell out of making that movie.

SC: Is the movie different from the original?
Raimi: Yes, it is. First of all, because it's got American actors in it. Secondly, the story's been rewritten, because instead of being Japanese in Japan it's now Americans in Japan. And there's a new addition to it, that is when you're in a foreign country, you're helpless if there's an emergency. And lots of emergencies happen and Japanese is a very difficult language. There are a lot of horror elements into that. What I found really, really interesting is that the script intrigued me a lot. A western horror picture has a definite morality system that it's usually the boyfriend or girlfriend who dies. The people that are good are the ones that don't die. It's fine, it's kind of the old boogeyman stories they told us as kids.

SC: Like HALLOWEEN.
Raimi: Exactly. Jamie Lee Curtis is the good girl and ends up living. But in Japanese horror pictures, usually it's an innocent person who releases the evil by accident. They piss on the wrong grave, they get into the wrong house...And then the innocent and the guilty get to pay the price. And it's really, really shocking when the innocent die...It's so surprising...And unconventional.

SC: What's the upcoming THE MAN WITH THE SCREAMING BRAIN about?
Raimi: I'm getting ready to go down to Bulgaria to shoot that. It stars me, Bruce Campbell and Stacy Keach. THE MAN WITH THE SCREAMING BRAIN is about a doctor who's experimenting with brain tissue and successfully puts two people's brains into just one body. It's a really cool plot. Stacy plays the evil Bulgarian guy, Bruce is the good guy and I play the doctor's assistant. It's made for TV, but they do release those on video in other countries, I know that. Ω

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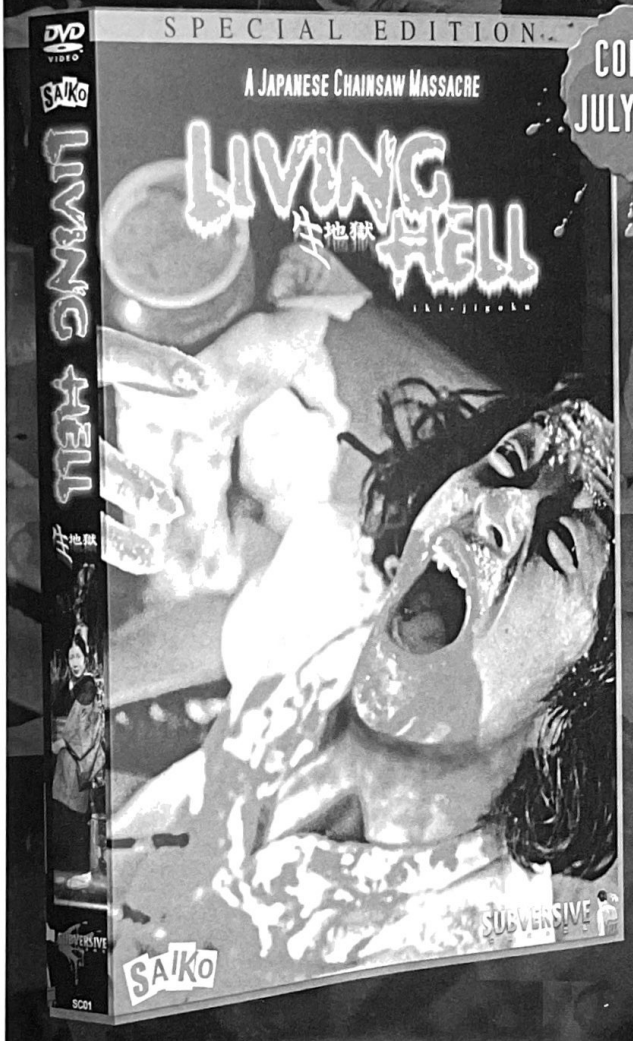

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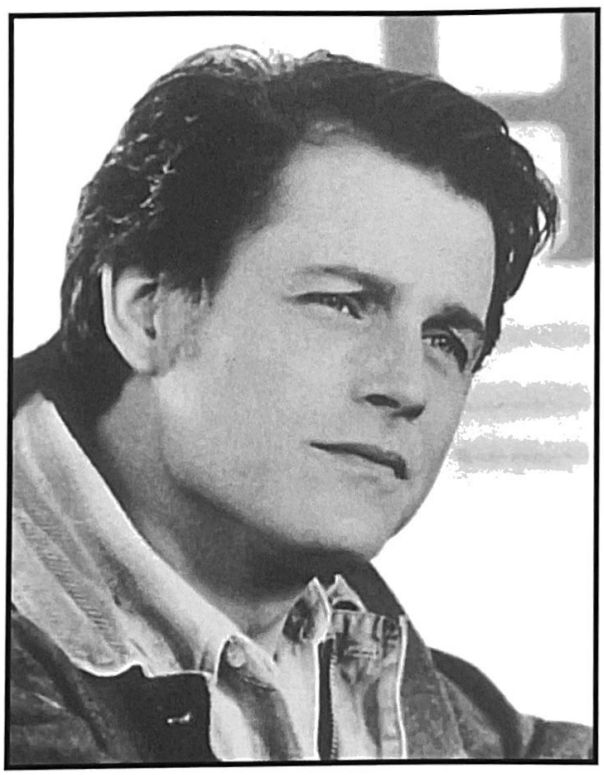
EDDIE WILSON SPEAKS!: An Interview With MICHAEL PARÉ

By NICANOR LORETI

We all know Michael Paré. He's one of those charismatic guys that portray the kind of loner hero you wish you could be someday — like Tom Cody in Walter Hill's STREETS OF FIRE (1984). Who doesn't love that movie in the bottom of their heart? Too cool to be real, Cody is one of the most impressive and likable heroes of the '80s and his final standoff with Raven (played by Willem Dafoe) has to be one of the classic fights of the decade. Born in October 1959, in Brooklyn, New York, Michael's career began with EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS (1983), a rock 'n' roll fable which became a cult classic as the years passed. Along with his co-stars Ellen Barkin and Tom Berenger, Paré soon became a major star.

Talking to him, one can see that he really loves art and cinema, and maybe that's why his filmography has become so varied and interesting. Never mind the ups and downs — he just cares about acting and making fun movies. From action pics like KILLING STREETS (1991), co-starring Lorenzo Lamas, to sci-fi flicks like director Roland Emmerich's MOON 44 (1990) or independent dramas like Sofia Coppola's THE VIRGIN SUICIDES (1999), he's appeared in numerous genres and has stayed cool in each one of them. Paré has also starred in the time travel adventure THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT (1984), with Nancy Allen; John Carpenter's 1995 remake VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED; Eric Red's werewolf tale BAD MOON (1996), alongside Mariel Hemingway; INTO THE SUN (1992), co-starring Anthony Michael Hall; EDDIE LIVES! (1989), the sequel to EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS; and the made-for-TV film noir EMPIRE CITY (1991). It was really cool to discover that his voice on the phone sounded just like in the movies. Hell, it sounds sentimental but this guy was one of my childhood heroes so it was a true pleasure to talk to him. I hope you have as much fun reading this interview.



SHOCK CINEMA: So how are you doing today?
Michael Paré: Well, I came from surfing. I've been surfing for a year now. I did a lot of surfing when I lived in Holland.

SC: How long had you been living outside the United States?
Paré: I lived there for ten years... I hadn't been in the US much until recently, when the Screen Actors Guild decided that I wasn't allowed to keep working around the world doing US movies if I didn't live here. So that's why I came back here.

SC: I'll start by asking about the early stages of your career, like EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS, for instance. How did you get the part?
Paré: I was working in the Caribbean on a TV show called THE GREATEST AMERICAN HERO. We were down there shooting a couple of episodes. We had to fly to New York to get back to California, and my agent called and asked me if I'd like to be in a movie by this guy called Martin Davidson. And I went in and just talked to him a little bit and we talked about music and our love for it and stuff like that. And when I got back to California he made me an offer...

SC: And were you the first choice for the role of Eddie?
Paré: I assume so, yes.

SC: How did you get along with your costars?
Paré: You know, this was very early in my career, so we were all young, inspiring, dreamy kind of actors and didn't care much about the industry. So there was a really cool environment. There wasn't any jealousy or backstabbing or any of that stuff that happens when people get famous and powerful. And me and Tom Berenger got along great, because we had a lot in common, although he had made more movies than me. So that was a lot of fun, because we had very similar backgrounds. His father was a printer and he's Irish-French-Canadian from Chicago, and I'm Irish-French-Canadian from New York. We could be brothers. (laughs)

SC: And what about Ellen Barkin?
Paré: Well, since I didn't have any scenes with her I didn't get to know her much. Since she was around we got to hung out sometimes, but I never got to really know her.

SC: Then you starred in the sequel, EDDIE LIVES!
Paré: Yes. Exactly...I think it was like eight years later. We shot that one in Montreal with a different director, a different writer, but the same musicians. And that was fun, you know, playing that character once again. But the thing was that in the first movie the director had hired a bunch of actors to play musicians and the second one he hired a bunch of musicians that weren't actors, except for Marina Orsini and Bernie Coulson. But nobody else was a real actor.

SC: Do you like the second movie?
Paré: Not as much as the first one. The first one was much better, it was all about rock 'n' roll. The second one when I see it now, there are so many things I would have done different. Rock 'n' roll is about the night and staying up until the sun comes out. But the director didn't like the music and didn't like shooting at night. He didn't have a rock 'n' roll understanding.

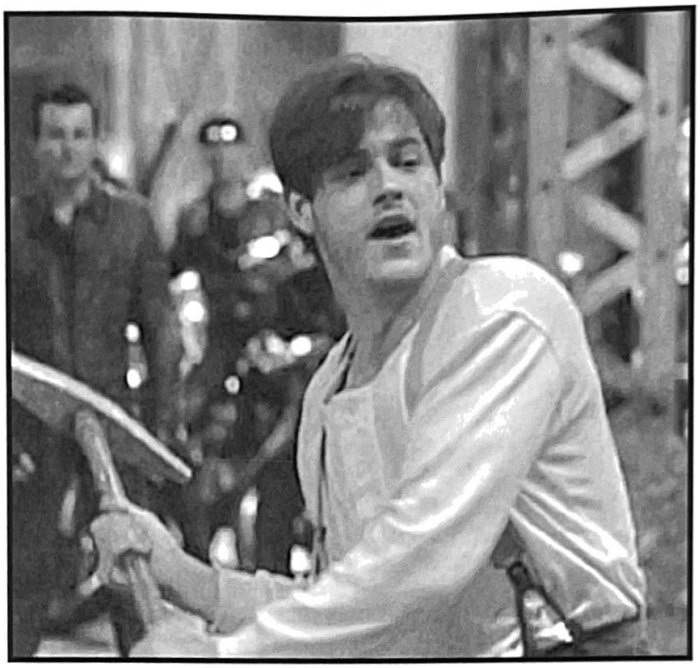
SC: And are you into rock 'n' roll? Which bands do you like?
Paré: Yeah, but I like the old stuff, really. I love the music from the '50s and '60s. I love the Beach Boys and I have their CD collection in the car now and I listen to it all the time when I go surfing. You know, rock 'n' roll is not much simpler than three chords and rhythm and blues. Now, a lot of the new music is nice but it doesn't move me as much as the old stuff does.

SC: Yeah, there's too much rap and not enough rock in the US right now...
Paré: It's not that the music is that complex, it's that I don't get the melody and the rap songs are so angry. You know, music is all about celebrating and not about marching. You know, I'm not in the army, I'm not into the revolution, I like to listen to music that can make me happy... Music is for dancing, not marching. (laughs)

SC: Then you got to star in another rock 'n' roll movie, STREETS OF FIRE. How did you get that part?
Paré: My agent called me and told me they were going to do this movie called STREETS OF FIRE. So they sent me the script and you know, it was Walter Hill and the budget was 26 million dollars, which was a lot of money for that time, and Diane Lane was starring so I said, "Wow!" At the moment. I was 24, so it was pretty overwhelming.

SC: What was it like working with Walter Hill?
Paré: Working with Walter was great. He just wasn't that interested in acting and exercising, he was all about the story. He said, *"This isn't a complicated story. It's very simple, just like Helen of Troy. You know, a girl is kidnapped by a bunch of guys and the hero goes and rescues her."* It was a very mythological story, I think the posters said it was a rock 'n' roll myth or a rock 'n' roll fable.

Walter is like a cowboy. He just knew it was a simple story. He said, *"It's not Shakespeare, you don't have to wonder what this thing means."* (laughs) It was really great to do a movie with a director like him and this enormous budget with all these fantastic actors. And Joel Silver was the producer — he's one of the giants of Hollywood — and Andy Laszlo was an award winning cinematographer, so it was just big. Everything was big. It took two days to light the scenes in which we would shoot like half a day. And that happened when I was 24, so I was like, "Oh, my God." I didn't know if I was in a dreamworld or a nightmare. (laughs)

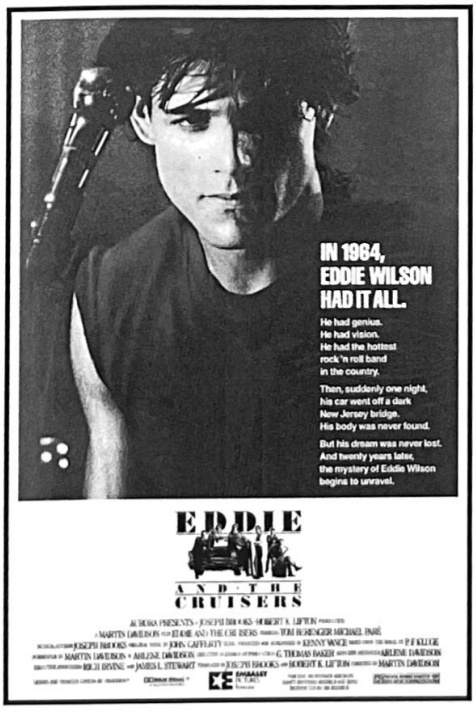


Tom Cody (Michael Paré) kicks ass in STREETS OF FIRE

SC: And did you expect to become a star when you first started?
Paré: No. When I started studying it was just like a rebellious thing I was doing in New York with my brother. He switched from engineering to English literature and I had gone to chef school to be a chef. So I quit cooking and started studying acting just because I could. And I really didn't expect that to happen. I never expected to be living in Los Angeles at my age with a resume like I have.

SC: And how long did it take once you started studying until you became a movie actor?
Paré: Let's see, I started studying when I was about nineteen and when I turned twenty I took a whole year off and just studied acting. And when I was 21, I got THE GREATEST AMERICAN HERO. For me it was amazing. I auditioned for ABC, and they were looking for someone to play a character who was just like me. And that's where the director Marty Davidson saw me and called me to star in EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS.

SC: And then you did THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT.
Paré: It was a wonderful story, which was originally written by John Carpenter. I actually read the book in which the story was based on when I was maybe 13 years old. So it was one of those things I really love that I've done.



SC: The first screenplay was written by John Carpenter, but it was rewritten, right?
Paré: Yeah, I found that out years later when I worked with John Carpenter. The thing was, he didn't know how to end it. So he sold them the script and they put in the Nancy Allen story.

SC: What was she like at the time?
Paré: Oh, she was a great star. She was Brian De Palma's ex-wife. She had done a lot of big studio movies. This were the early '80s, when Hollywood was all about rock 'n' roll and lots of fun.

SC: They made better movies back then...
Paré: Well, it was before so many computer generated special effects. They depended a lot more on the story back then. And now there are some scenes in THE MATRIX where they spent 20 million dollars and there's no actor involved. It's all computer generated.

SC: What happens is that they end up making movies that are so expensive that they don't even get the money back.
Paré: Well, if you go to a casino and you go to the 100 dollar crap table, you can lose a lot of money. If you go to the 2 dollar table, you only lose a little bit of money...It's a new breed of filmmakers and every couple of years there are new guys that come along. I think movies are going to go the way of theater and there will be films that are like the big musicals on Broadway like THE LION KING and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST and there will also be places that run little plays like THE ICEMAN COMETH. Today you have big movies like THE MATRIX, and also little movies like you see on the Independent Film Channel. All story and character driven. I think at a certain time, when you get over thirty, you start to get more cerebral and a little less shock entertained. You know, you start reading and stuff like that.

SC: There was also a sequel to PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT...
Paré: Yes, I was going to do that but I had a personal conflict with one of the producers. We just didn't get along. I was very excited about working with the director Stephen Cornwell, because I had done a movie with him called KILLING STREETS. He was a very interesting writer/director. So it was just a producer thing. But I'm trying to get to do another picture with Cornwell right now. I think he's a brilliant guy. I regret having not done that, but when a producer says certain things, I just can't work with him.

SC: What was it like playing twin brothers in KILLING STREETS?
Paré: It was a lot of fun. I think that was maybe my first or second time in Israel. Those days were much quieter then. What was interesting is that you were driving down the road and you'd see some ruins and they were like two thousand years old. And they were just near the side of the road. In the United States, they would be under glass, with signs saying "this is a great national treasure." But to them, what's two thousand years? I found that very interesting.

SC: Your co-star in that film was Lorenzo Lamas. What was he like?
Paré: Well, he was playing a role that was supposed to antagonize me, so we weren't really hanging out and having a good time together. He had his wife there and when he wasn't working he was just being a tourist. Lorenzo and I did another movie together years ago and I really enjoy working with him. He's a really experienced guy. He's been doing this for a long time, he's a second generation actor.

SC: You did another movie in Israel, DEADLY HEROES (1994).
Paré: I did a few movies in Israel. That one was with Jan-Michael Vincent and Menahem Golan.

SC: Billy Drago was in it too...
Paré: Billy, yeah. I worked a couple of times with Billy. That was a lot of fun, because it was just a straight action picture. There wasn't really much drama except for the scenes with my son. And we got to swim in a harbor and use the scuba equipment, and run around with the guns. It was a fun thing. And Jan, I've been watching since I was a little kid. He just turned 50 when we shot that.

SC: And was he doing OK at the time?
Paré: Oh, yeah. He was just like an old pro. I had no problems with him. He was a cool guy.

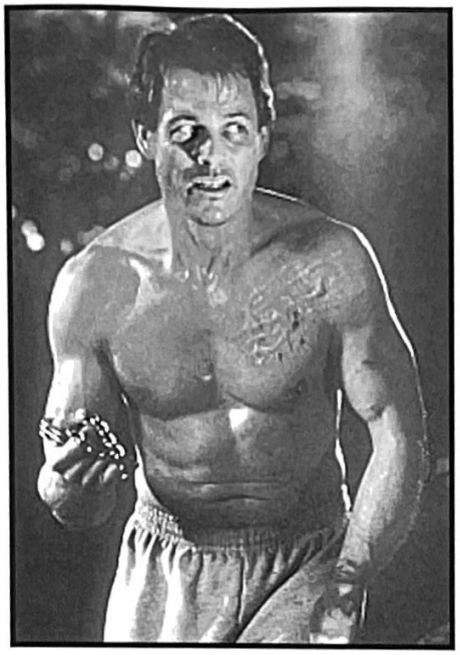
SC: And Billy? He's quite a character. I'm a fan of his work.
Paré: Well, Billy is a very intense guy. I had a great time with him. He's a real cowboy, I think he's from Oklahoma or something.

SC: You also worked together in SOLAR FORCE (1994).
Paré: Yes, we shot that one in Africa. That was a movie that my brother wrote. Boaz Davidson directed it and he did a lot of rewrites on it. He kind of simplified the story. The original script was based on the Arthurian character Parsifal. You know, the guy who finds the Holy Grail and then he's so overwhelmed he forgets to ask the ques-

tion and he spends the rest of his life making up for that mistake. So that was the basic plot from the original script. But Boaz didn't like that so he changed it.

SC: It ended up being like a MAD MAX movie.
Paré: Yeah, that's how it ended up.

SC: Do you like it anyway?
Paré: Well, you know, there's twenty-seven minutes of non-stop action. Once the bad guys attack it's just like half an hour of gunshots, explosions, this and that. So it is what it is. I was hoping to sneak in something poetic, like Walter Hill does. All of his big action movies were based on Greek mythology, so we decided to base this one on the Arthurian myth.


Paré gets feral in BAD MOON

SC: Have you ever talked with Walter about making a sequel to STREETS OF FIRE?
Paré: Yeah, I did and he said he would love to do it. But it's up to the studio. Somebody would have to call him and say, *"Here you have 50 million dollars to make STREETS OF FIRE 2."*

He could use all the same cast. They are all in great shape today... I saw Willem a couple of years ago. He looks great.

SC: I've always thought he was like this eccentric guy.
Paré: When I knew him on STREETS OF FIRE he wasn't so eccentric but he had just gotten married, so he was still a young actor. But this was 20 years ago. And when I [last] saw him I said, "Hey, Willem, I have a son now!" and he said, *"My kid's in college now."* (laughs) So I don't know if he's that eccentric. Actors go through lots of phases in their life.

SC: What was it like working with John Carpenter after all those years, on VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED?
Paré: John was great. He was another guy who behaved like a gentleman. There was absolutely no questioning. Everybody knew that John knew exactly what he wanted out of every shot and every line. And watching him work, you knew that John was a real artist. And I enjoyed working like that. You didn't have to worry about fixing the dialogue moments before you shoot. A strong director makes an actor's job much easier.

SC: You've done movies in lots of different genres, like sci-fi, action, even dramas. Which do you like the most?
Paré: It's hard to say... It depends on the individual story. I go to acting class, and in acting class we always study drama. You know, you can't work in an action movie without knowing how to do drama. It depends on the material.

SC: You've done bit parts in dramas like HOPE FLOATS (1998) and THE VIRGIN SUICIDES. Why did you choose to do these kinds of movies?
Paré: Well, these are roles that a lot of people didn't get to see me in. If you do big movies that are action or sci-fi and then you do a little drama, maybe you'll get considered for a big drama.

SC: What was Sofia Coppola (who directed THE VIRGIN SUICIDES) like?
Paré: Once again, she was focused only on the story and didn't care much about acting or camera or anything else. And the funny thing is that her mother was walking around on the set with a video camera. She said, *"Hi, I'm Sofia's mother. I'm gonna be taping all this."* (laughs) It sounded like, *"This is my daughter, she's making a movie. Isn't it wonderful?"*...But it was very nice to see her directing. I mean, she's the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola, one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. And she was just this girl who was making a movie. So it was very nice to be around her.

SC: Another movie I especially like from your filmography is INTO THE SUN.
Paré: That one was with Anthony Michael Hall and Roger Moore's daughter, Deborah Moore. That was a lot of fun, because we went into the desert here in California. It was very well written and produced, and I got to live at home during production.

SC: Did you get to fly?
Paré: Yeah, they took me up on a jet.

SC: The relationship between the two main characters was very interesting.
Paré: Yeah, and there was a good chemistry between us, because Anthony Michael Hall was a very good comedian. He did a bunch of movies when he was under 18, and then he did SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE. And he approached acting completely different than I did. So there was a natural contrast between our characters. We didn't have to imagine or pretend too much.

SC: Did you have to research for that role? Do you ever do that kind of stuff?
Paré: No...You know, the longer I do it, the less I like to rehearse with the rest of the cast. I like to work alone. I have a very simple technique of letting your imagination fly. Imagining yourself having been brought into the circumstances that the character is into and having to deal with his conflicts. It's not a big deal.

SC: So you don't have the problem that other actors have, like taking your character home and everything.
Paré: I think that's an affliction. (laughs) That would be terrible. Imagine if you were Anthony Hopkins. You're doing SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, and then you go home and kill your whole family. (laughs)

SC: So you didn't really become a werewolf during the making of BAD MOON...
Paré: Oh, no. (laughs) But I did have like four hours of sleep because it took eight hours to get the makeup on. And then we would shoot for twelve hours. So I slept in my motor home for four hours and then I went back to work, so I felt like an animal but not a werewolf. (laughs) I felt like a trained dog, you know?

SC: Is it hard working every day for that amount of time?
Paré: No. Not if you're having a good time. If it's a difficult production and they tell you to go to bed too late and get up early, it could be bad, but this was not the case.

Paré takes public transit in Walter Hill's STREETS OF FIRE

SC: So you enjoyed BAD MOON?
Paré: Yeah, I had a great time with Mariel Hemingway. She's like American royalty. She's like a Kennedy, and Eric Red was another "general light" director. If he was happy you just knew that the picture was working.

SC: When you choose to do a project, do you ever do it just because of the talent involved, or do you only do it because of the script?
Paré: You know, each case is unique in itself. Sometimes a director is looking for the right project and other times, you know he's gonna do a good job because of his past experience or past performances.

SC: I want to know about MOON 44, which was the first big movie directed by Roland Emmerich.

Paré: It wasn't such a big movie. I think it cost a little more than a million dollars. We shot in his father's warehouse in Stuttgart, Germany.

SC: Really? It looks like it cost 15 or 20 million.
Paré: Well, that's why Hollywood figured that if he could do that with one million, there was no limit to what he could do with a bigger budget.

SC: And Dean Devlin was an actor in it, right?
Paré: He had a small role, a supporting role.

SC: Then he went on to write and produce with Roland. Do you know what happened?
Paré: They became friends. Dean Devlin comes from a big Hollywood family, so he had a lot of contacts. So he was the one that made it possible for Roland to maintain control of his own movies.

Nancy Allen and Paré in THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT

SC: Brian Thompson was in that too.
Paré: I wasn't with him for too long [during production]. He surfs down here at the beach.

SC: So he's a surfer too? Do you know many actors who surf?
Paré: Well, in my class there's two. Jan-Michael Vincent was a great surfer too. Don Stroud... and John Milius, the director, was a big surfer.

SC: Did you ever surf with him?
Paré: No, but I'm working on it. (laughs) I want him to write a television series for me. It's about — remember that show THE ROCKFORD FILES?

SC: Yeah.
Paré: This would be like ROCKFORD FILES but the detective is a surfer. I want him to have a big motor home down at the beach and to always work down at the motor home, and when the waves are big, he can't work. (laughs) We could get beautiful girls — just like in BAYWATCH — laying and hanging around the beach. And then, maybe he lost his license to carry a gun, I don't know.

A good friend of mine is gonna work with him in a movie he's just written.

SC: You did this made-for-TV movie called EMPIRE CITY, which was pretty good for TV.
Paré: Yes, Mark Rosner directed that. I liked it a lot. It was supposed to be a television pilot but the network decided to go with another show with a dog. (laughs) They said, *"We don't want another detective show, we want something different."* But it was a good movie nonetheless.

SC: You were also in THE DANGEROUS (1994), with Kary Tagawa.
Paré: He's one of these eccentric guys. I think he's half Hawaiian, half Japanese. He was living in Hawaii when we made the movie. We got along very well. He was really into meditation. We also were going to do another movie which never came out. He was a very intelligent and complicated guy.

SC: Tell me about RAGING ANGELS (1995), that apocalyptic movie.
Paré: Right... That was funny, huh? (laughs) You see, that was a movie where they fired the director in the middle of it. So, for one director I was playing the villain and the other director wanted me to be the victim. But when they approached me with the script and told me that Diane Ladd and Shelley Winters were going to be in it, I thought, "Wow, there's two Academy Award winners, I just wanna be around those people." And I got to sing, I got to sing my own songs. So I just said, "OK, I'll do this." (laughs) It was one of those crazy productions and of all the movies I've done, there's gotta be a few turkeys. (laughs)

SC: Why did they fire the original director?
Paré: I think it was because they went into production before they had their distributor. And when the distributor found out I was the bad guy they said, *"Oh no! Michael Pare can't be the bad guy!"* And they said, *"Well, the script just says so! And if it says so, he has to be the bad guy."* And they said, *"No, he has to be the victim,"* and then they fired him.

SC: And the other actors agreed with him or did they just go along?
Paré: No, they just went along with the changes.

SC: I recently saw you in RED SERPENT (2002), with Roy Scheider.
Paré: Oh, you did? It's the one we shot in Russia, in Moscow. That was really cool.

SC: What was Scheider like?
Paré: He was a pleasure to be around. He's such a pro. He's done so many great classics like ALL THAT JAZZ and JAWS and THE FRENCH CONNECTION. He was one of the big stars from the '70's and had a long history in Hollywood.

SC: And do you usually learn stuff from these guys when you are around them?
Paré: Yeah, when I find out there's gonna be one of these old actors in the movie, it really makes it more attractive to me. I did a movie with Rod Steiger, his last movie. And it was a terrible story but I had four scenes with Rod Steiger, so yeah, I watch these guys and learn a little bit from each one of them.

SC: Which directors do you particularly like?
Paré: Like I said, I like Walter Hill, Martin Davidson, John Carpenter, I like Eric Red and Stephen Cornwell very much. I like the guys who focus on the story. You can answer anybody's questions if you know what to do with the story.

SC: Would you like to direct someday?
Paré: That's kind of why I'm trying to get back on television. If I get a TV series, after the first season they'll let me direct a couple of episodes, and then I could direct a movie. So I have a plan. I would love to direct, because it seems like a natural evolution...And it's not that I wanna do it right, it's just that I wanna do it my way. I'm not saying that anybody's done it wrong. I have my ideas.

SC: What are going to do next?
Paré: I've got two pictures that I *might* do. One is a version of A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Another one is a drama, about child abuse and the consequences it has on people's lives, and there's one about a jewelry heist. But you never know if it's for sure until you are on location.

SC: Who are your co-stars in them?
Paré: For the one about child abuse, my co-stars are Anne Bancroft and Gena Rowlands and for the jewelry heist, they're talking to Harry Connick, Jr. But you know, all of these are movies that are in development. Anybody can end up doing them. The CHRISTMAS CAROL film has lots of actors attached, like Michael Madsen and Harvey Keitel. It's A CHRISTMAS CAROL but in the police genre.

SC: The last question, which is your favorite movie from your filmography?
Paré: The first one, EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS. We were innocent then. We showed up on location, none of us got paid, we stayed for eight or ten weeks in a crappy hotel and we were just acting. We were like a theater group. It was the innocent time of making movies. No one cared about the money, it was really a wonderful time.

SC: Yeah, people love that movie. The soundtrack has become a cult item.
Paré: I just saw those guys [John Cafferty & The Beaver Brown Band]. They were doing a show up here in California and I went and had a couple of beers with them and talked about old times. Ω

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FILM REVIEWS

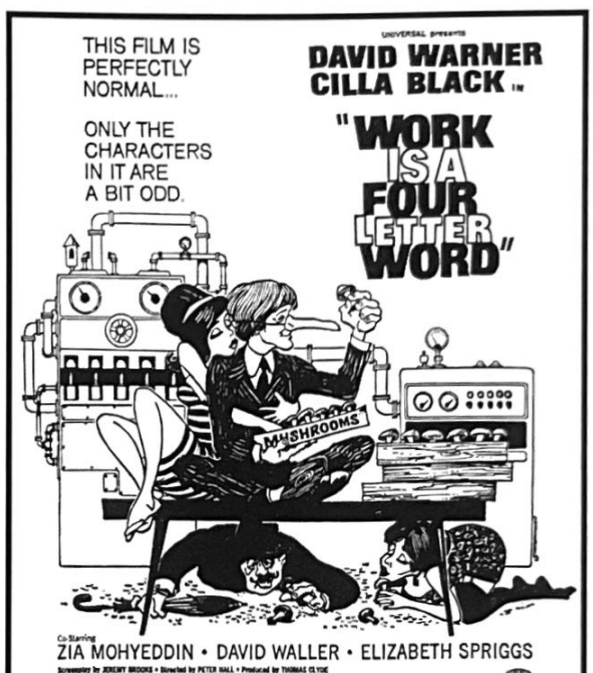
WORK IS A FOUR LETTER WORD (SuperHappyFun; 1968).

Following his acclaimed title role of MORGAN!, David Warner continued to rebel against 'normal' society in this wildly anarchic British comedy revolving around psychedelic fungi. It was also an odd choice of material for director Peter Hall, best known in the '60s as the Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. He recruited several RSC actors for this absurd gig, along with a script by novelist, playwright and RSC literary manager Jeremy Brooks, who adapted it from Henry Livings' stage play "Eh?"

Warner plays Valentine Brose, an unemployed London lay-about who's trying to grow hallucinogenic mushrooms in his home (which explains his hobby of following behind mounted policemen and collecting horse manure). Val needs a 'steamy' place for his giant Mexican 'shrooms to flourish, and the perfect locale is a fully-automated power plant that's currently looking for a night janitor. He bursts into their top exec's office, destroys the place, is chased by security guards, but still gets the job. Meanwhile, Cilla Black (a Cavern Club hat-check girl turned '60s pop-singer, after being signed by Brian Epstein) co-stars as Betty Dorrick, who gamely suffers through boyfriend Val's anti-social behavior, such as moving their honeymoon to the power plant, so he can tend to his freaky fungi.

The instant one of Valentine's (surprisingly quick-acting) magic mushrooms touches one's tongue, the trippy sound effects kick in and they're blissfully stoned. As in most farces, all of the characters converge during the finale, but what begins as a simple slapstick chase throughout the plant ends with everyone engorging on mushroom caps as big as their fist and an orgy of euphoric destruction.

Hall's comic pacing is abysmal, but Warner's alternately rude and charming role has a lovably-subversive, Lennon-esque edge. The cinematography is provided by Gilbert Taylor (A HARD DAY'S NIGHT, DR. STRANGELOVE); the story's out-of-control technology, surveillance overkill and corporate inhumanity helped plant the seeds for later films such as BRAZIL; plus I'd swear I heard (RSC-member) Patrick Stewart's voice on a public address system. I was only 10-years-old when I first caught this warped comedy, and I didn't understand what the hell was happening (particularly the hallucinogenic mushroom bits). Watching it again, over 30 years later, I'm not surprised that I was so perplexed.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DOROTHEA'S REVENGE [Dorothea's Rache] (SuperHappyFun; 1974).

A young girl's exploration of deviant sexuality sounds like the springboard for a standard EuroTrash raunch-fest, but director Peter Fleischman (who co-scripted with BELLE DE JOUR's Jean-Claude Carriere) has more complex and bizarre ambitions. Sure, this German, English-subtitled film is chock full of bare skin and schtupping, but it's primarily an artsy, underground parody of then-popular sexploitation films, with its sprightly opening tune inviting us (as we'll soon learn, ironically) to a "festival of love."

Anna Henkel stars as 17-year-old Dorothea Funke, who lives in Hamburg with her working-class parents, including a father who manufactures "canned laughter devices" (bags that 'laugh' when you shake 'em). One morning, Dorothea comes to the breakfast table dirty and disheveled, clutching a red steaming meteorite, and announcing that she was just screwed by a Martian. Obviously Dorothea isn't your ordinary teenager, and armed with her handy movie camera, the inquisitive (and often nude) girl and her friends are shooting an 'educational' dirty movie called "The Lexicon of Love."

Dorothea wanders through one strange, sordid or distasteful sexual escapade after another, while maintaining an almost clinical detachment and often commenting directly to the camera. Some sequences are absurd (a clown-masked sex instructor, and a young couple hooking their genitals to a Rube Goldberg-style device made of bicycle parts), others are grim (Dorothea pays a visit to three middle-aged perverts, who take turns fucking the teen, who then turns her camera against them for a post-coitus interview), and the story's tone shifts radically. One minute Dorothea is frolicking about town with streetwalker Sissy, the next she's walking in on a lovesick teacher's suicide or trying out prostitution (with a pissed-off john beating her with a belt for making him cum too quickly). Her journey even leads to an S&M parlor with caged and singed male clientele, including a crucified one-legged guy.

What more could you ask for? How about a visit from Jesus Christ, who offers totally worthless advice to sleep with "children and fools," which leads to Dorothea fondling a boy and giving a handjob to a retarded flasher. It's a weird but rather pointless voyage, sprinkled with cute nude girls (particularly Henkel, who seems rather stunned or stoned throughout) and flabby, unattractive men. DOROTHEA'S is half softcore-porn flick, half arthouse oddity, and though it doesn't truly succeed at either goal, it has the distinction of being one of the most twisted and joyless sex-films you'll ever encounter.

OUTRAGE (Shocking Videos; 1973).

Some of the coolest '70s made-for-TV movies centered on horror or revenge, and this ABC outing ("based on reported incidents"; how friggin' vague is that?!) is a prime example of the later category, with an average husband and father reaching his breaking point when faced with teenage punks. Director Richard T. Heffron blatantly pushes every emotional button, trims it to a lean 70 minutes, and aims his dose of pre-DEATH WISH vigilante justice at anyone who's ever been bullied by some asswipes.

Robert Culp stars as veterinarian James Kiler, a family man who's sick of rowdy teens speeding through the quiet streets of Oak Meadows in their hot rods. In an example of efficient exploitation filmmaking, it's only six minutes into the movie and the j.d's are already trying to run down Culp! It's rich kids gone wild! As Kiler soon discovers, the police are spineless, the courts are a sham, the boys' parents don't give a damn, and even the halfway decent townsfolk want to gut the police force in order to save on taxes. When he attempts to prosecute the kids, they terrorize his wife (Marilyn Mason) and kids by tossing paint balloons at the house and blowing up the mailbox.

It's fun to watch Culp lose his temper — since he's so righteously, hilariously unsubtle — and after Kiler is burnt in effigy on his front lawn, bricks are tossed through his window and they kill his dog, this average guy is pushed over the edge. It isn't until the final 10 minutes that Kiler decides to handle the problem himself, Buford Pusser style! It's about fucking time! But after all of this slow build-up, the ending is a bit of a letdown, with more violence against property than people. Shucks! Then again, it's a TV-movie from the days when ALL IN THE FAMILY was considered subversive, so it's lucky the uptight censors allowed them to go as far as they did.

The supporting cast is littered with familiar faces, including TV SPIDER-MAN Nicholas Hammond as one of the punk kids and THAT '70s SHOW's Don Stark as a tearfully apologetic teen. In addition, James Sikking can be spotted as a cop, Ramon Bieri plays the only helpful officer, oblivious neighbor Mark Lenard gets the crap beaten out of him by Culp, and multi-Emmy-winning Beah Richards has the thankless role of the Kiler's feisty black housekeeper (was there any other kind on early-'70s TV?). Efficiently photographed by John McStephens (PRAY FOR THE WILDCATS), this set a pattern for dozens of 'taking-the-law-into-your-own-hands' romps to come.

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S SUPERMAN (5 Minutes to Live; 1975).

Back in 1966, Harold Prince's musical adaptation of SUPERMAN boasted songs by Lee Adams (BYE BYE BIRDIE) and Charles Strouse (ANNIE), and lasted on Broadway for only 129 performances. Nine years after its demise, ABC aired this truncated, 89-minute, cheapjack abomination, and it's easy to understand why the network buried it in an 11:30 p.m. timeslot. Eliminating many of the original songs, it has crude pasteboard sets, looks as if they couldn't afford second takes, and was shot-on-video, back when that cut-rate alternative really looked like shit.

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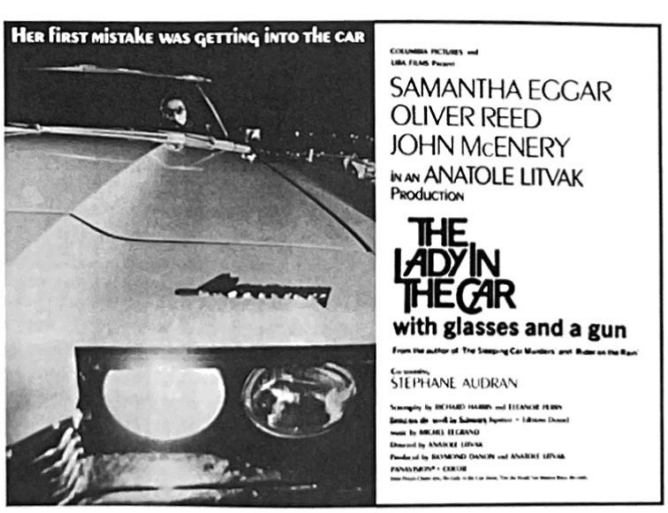
After quickly regurgitating his origin (with his rocket ship labeled "Contents: One Innocent Babe"), we head to Metropolis, where Superman (charisma-challenged David Wilson) stops crime while keeping his Daily Planet day job as Clark Kent. Lesley (Ann) Warren is a sexy (and seemingly lobotomized) Lois Lane, who barely notices Clark, yet pines for Superman. But in a strange move, the story focuses as much on the supporting lunks as our title hero: Kenneth Mars is Planet columnist Max Mencken, who despises Superman; Loretta Swit is reporter Sydney Carlton, who tries to seduce Clark; and instead of an all-singing, all-dancing Lex Luthor, we get 4th-rate scientist Dr. Abner Sedgwick (David Wayne).

There isn't much of a plot. Some klutzy gangsters (including HAPPY DAYS' Al Molinaro, Harvey "Eric Von Zipper" Lembeck and Malachi Throne) sing an off-key tune about their plan to rub out Superman, while Sedgwick lures Sup into a trap involving the world's cheesiest looking "Death Ray" and plots with Max to disgrace the hero. Others roped into this fiasco were PASSWORD-host Alan Ludden as Perry White, Danny Goldman as a Jimmy Olsen-style flunkie, and Gary Owens as our narrator. Going from bad to worse, Lois wonders if she's falling for forgettable Clark (complete with a ballet-fantasy-housewife dance routine), as the whiny Man of Steel wallows in psychological problems ("I don't deserve love!" he confesses).

Loosely based on the book by David Newman and Robert Benton (who also co-wrote Chris Reeve's SUPERMAN), and adapted by Romeo Muller (who scripted most of Rankin-Bass' animated Xmas specials), the only moment that comic fans might appreciate are two guys named Jerry and Joe (a wink to Superman-creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster) who urge Sup not to be so "uptight." The cast desperately overplays their one-dimensional roles, there's horribly flat direction by Jack Regas (who'd later helm ELECTRA WOMAN AND DYNA-GIRL and THE BAY CITY ROLLERS SHOW), any choreography is laughable, and most of its paltry budget was spent on breakaway props and walls. The title says it all. It *is* a bird. A dead, mildewed turkey.



THE LADY IN THE CAR WITH GLASSES AND A GUN (SuperHappyFun; 1970).

Based on the novel by Sebastien Japrisot (A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT), a young woman's wild weekend of mystery and murder becomes a goofy, fragmented mindfuck that mixes British actors and a Gallic backdrop. Purposely vague and perplexing, this final film from director Anatole Litvak (SORRY, WRONG NUMBER) also features a pre-BROOD team-up of Samantha Eggar and Oliver Reed. Unfortunately, despite his star billing, rowdy Ollie is missing for much of the movie.

Eggar stars as Danielle Lang, a chic secretary at a Paris ad agency, who's asked to work over the long Bastille Day weekend by her pushy boss, Michael Caldwell (Reed), whose catty bitch of a wife (Stephane Audran) was once Dani's roommate. She has to drive her boss and his family to the airport — on route for a Geneva vacation — with Dani struggling behind the wheel of his immense American convertible. But on the way back to Paris, she takes a wrong turn and winds up in the countryside, heading towards the Riviera, where she's continually recognized by local residents from earlier in the day.

So what the hell is going on? Is it mistaken identity? A "great big evil conniving plot?" Is she nuts? Whatever the answer, Dani (as well as the viewer) is confounded by her plight. The fact that Danielle doesn't speak French (despite living in Paris), only adds to her alienation. She's later attacked in a gas station washroom, and what does Dani do when a handsome stranger (John McEnery) jumps into her passenger seat? She sleeps with him, of course! But then he disappears, the car disappears, and when Dani finally locates the auto, it comes with a dead man and a gun in the trunk. It eventually leads to an intricate conspiracy that's continually screwed up by Dani's unpredictable behavior

If you're going to subject an audience to 98 minutes of overwrought confusion, you better have a damned good pay-off. Unfortunately, this one's implausibly silly, and since Dani remains a confused cipher throughout, it's difficult to warm up to this wishy-washy gal. Meanwhile, Reed's character initially seems like a happily married gent, but you know there's more to Caldwell than that. If not, why would they hire an actor as colorful as Reed to play a simple family man? Let's not forget notable contributions from Bernard Fresson (FRENCH CONNECTION II) as a helpful truck driver, uneasy cinematography by Claude Renoir (BARBARELLA), as well as Petula Clark's breezy "On the Road" on the soundtrack.

WHAT A CRAZY WORLD (Video Search of Miami; 1963).

Kitchen sink drama meets musical kitsch in this cinematic vehicle for UK singer/guitarist Joe Brown (best known nowadays for his longtime friendship with some obscure band called The Beatles), who leads a cast of B-level British singers in an odd patchwork of working-class atmosphere, period slang and hairdos, mixed-up romance, creative ambitions, and corny musical numbers. A more appropriate title would've been SING BACK IN ANGER.

Brown stars as Alf Hitchens, a young dead-broke Cockney lad who spends his days roaming the streets with his mates, getting reamed by his dad for being on the dole, and dreaming of musical stardom. UK pop starlet Susan Maughan ("Bobby's Girl") is Alf's on-again/off-again girlfriend Marylin, who has big hair, a concrete bosom, and a 18-inch Vampira waistline. Meanwhile, Joe Brown's off-screen pal Marty Wilde (father of singer Kim Wilde) plays rowdy, ducktailed, best friend Herbie Shadbolt.

At first glance, the script's streetwise set-up fits snugly in between Cliff Richards' EXPRESSO BONGO and David Essex's THAT'LL BE THE DAY. But the moment Herbie breaks into song in the middle of the unemployment office (accompanied by every dancing foreign stereotype imaginable), it suddenly bears a teeth-gnashing resemblance to COP ROCK. Just as quickly, the wretched musical number concludes and it's back to QUADROPHENIA-lite, with rebellious Alf wanting more out of life than being a lay-about, while hoping to sell one of his awful songs (the twangy title tune) to a music publisher. One highpoint is an on-stage appearance by "Frantic Freddy and the Dreamers," who perform "Sally Ann," a twistin' version of "Camptown Races," and "Short Shorts" (with the entire band in their skivvies).

Directed by Hammer-veteran Michael Carreras (THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB) and based on a musical by Alan Klein (who also plays one of Herbie's boys), Alf's increasingly-soggy story is liberally sprinkled with schmaltzy, instantly forgettable numbers about first love and achieving success. Joe doesn't even chime in with a tune until halfway in, and even though Brown has just enough screen presence to get by, it's not enough to save the movie, which is most effective when sticking closest to reality. At times the story isn't even aimed at a young, modern audience, like when Alf's disgruntled parents have a musical duet about disrespectful children! Worst of all, when Alf becomes a respectable citizen at the end, most teens will agree that they prefer the short-tempered, anti-social misfit from the opening scenes.

ANNA PUCHALSKI; Jersey City, NJ.

BATTLEFIELD BASEBALL (Subversive Cinema; 2003). It's a manga adaptation double bill, featuring two extremely different types of high school bad boys! First up is BATTLEFIELD BASEBALL, which is based on the comic *Battlefield Stadium* by Gataro Man, helmed by first-time director Yudai Yamaguchi (screenwriter and assistant director of VERSUS) and opens with the title "This film is dedicated to all who love baseball" and a glory days montage of heroic players — and then violence! Carnage! And — it's all a dream! The Principal of Seido High is having major anxiety of the upcoming baseball finals, upon learning that the opposing team is the no-holds-barred Gedo High, the most violent in the league. Seido has a good team, headed by the moose-like Matsuri Gorilla, who keeps the other players in line and working hard (if only to avoid a beating?). Worst player on the team is skinny "Four-eyes," who's sent to retrieve a fly ball and wanders into the Bad Students' hangout, complete with skulls of their victims! He's accosted by a punk with big hair that only exists in high school manga, but, napping nearby (hanging upside down a la vampire bat) is Seido High's new transfer student, Jubeh the Baseball (baby-faced Tak Sakaguchi)! He defeats the bully, and in turn, the entire gang, which is led by Bancho, a 30-year-old guy in a high school uniform. Jubeh fights off Bancho with a stunning series of slides and ducks — finally knocking him out of his suit and into the air (wearing a gold loincloth!?). The Principal is thrilled, since Jubeh's "fighting baseball" technique could be the answer to dealing with the next game...but Jubeh won't play. Why? It comes as a musical flashback — complete with muted colors and sappy duets — as we learn that Jubeh's miraculous pitch killed his own father, causing him to leave home and transfer from school to school, never playing baseball again. Anyway, Four-eyes convinces him to play anyway by explaining that his mother (a man in lipstick and pink chiffon) doesn't allow him to have anything to do with baseball, but love of the game keeps him coming back. And it just goes on from there, with Jubeh eventually having to avenge his fallen comrades. The film is filled with clever in-jokes, from Jubeh's heart-throb hair and mug, slow-mo walking shots and comic book villains, plus a gaggle of people who show up to applaud at every touching moment. The other baseball team is made up of goons with Hammer Horror make-up and even a decimated corpse, who bring a new dimension to the sport with explosives and weapons. It's WILD ZERO with baseball instead of Rock 'n' Roll! Weird and surreal, silly and affectionate, like Troma at its best, and a nice change from all the pretentious, MATRIX style horror and sci-fi that abounds these days.

BLUE SPRING [Aoi Haru] (2001). High school dramas can be bad. It takes a lot to impress me. I never did relate to the John Hughes teen experience, but BLUE SPRING manages to be entertaining, clichéd and realistic all at once. Adapted from a manga (more precisely, a serial comic never collected in volume in Japan), director Toshiaki Toyoda builds the story and relationships between the actors carefully. It opens on the first day of school and new Senior Kujo (Ryuhei Matsuda) picking a lock while buddy Aoki (Hirofumi Arai) smokes. The lock opens, giving these young punks access to the roof of their school, the focal point of the story. They are joined by their other posturing mates and play a game of "Clap" that consists of standing on the wrong side of the roof railing and clapping a progressive number of times before grabbing back onto the railing (or falling to one's death). Kujo wins the clap (8 times), ousting the old boss and his gofer as head of the gang and putting Kujo and Aoki in the seat of power. This group of boys have had their last moment as friends before the story dispatches them in one way or another. Matsuda makes for a picturesque bad boy with his disaffected expression, but still manages to play the role with sympathy and depth. He has little interest in running the gang, so it's Aoki who drives him to be cruel and act like the boss. On the other hand, Aoki is a Loser with a capital L. Even the juniors push him around! And much of Kujo's violence is more to preserve the virtue of his friend then to uphold his image. The violence is brutal and realistic — no fancy fight scenes here, just baseball bats and the crunch of broken teeth — but there is an underlying message. As Kujo (no ambition), Kimura (failed baseball star) and Yukio (musician with no future) are chided into helping a teacher plant flowers and look after them, their progress is reflected through the growth of the plants and insight of the Hanada Sensei. Amongst these boys, Ota wants most to be Yakuza but perishes at the hands of Yukio's mental snap. It's Kimura, who, after watching his school baseball team fail to make it to the finals becomes a real-life gangster. It's not long before the only remaining friends are Aoki and Kujo. Aoki is obsessed with violence and power while Kujo prefers the roof and contemplating classmate Ghost who "has a disease and won't last much longer," but spends his free time protecting cherry trees from caterpillars. The film barrels toward its finale with violent speed and a chilling conclusion. Director Toyoda wraps the film back on itself with skill and grace, aided by excellent editing and striking visuals. In the wrong hands this could've easily been overwrought, pretty-boys-gone-bad pabulum. It's far from that. Instead, it's one of the best High School Dramas I've seen.

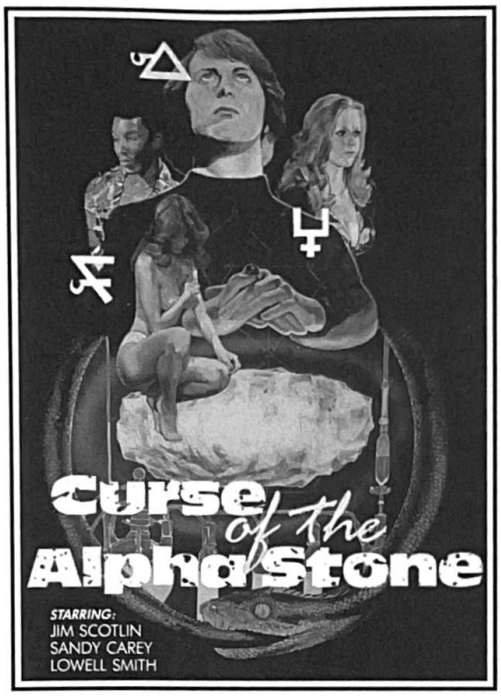
GERARD ALEXANDER; New South Wales, Australia.

FUCKLAND (2000). This Argentinian feature by Jose Luis Marques was #8 in the series of Dogma Films made from the '90s on. It's shot on video, often hand-held, but that only helps the narrative, about an Argentinian going to the Falkland Islands with a hidden camera. Fabian has saved his money from doing magic shows so that he can afford a trip to the Falklands. There, he plans to impregnate a Britisher, thereby seeding the island with fresh Argentinian blood. His grand plan is that hundreds of Argentinians will follow his example, thereby taking the Falklands back from British sovereignty. His target is a girl named Camila, which he spots in church. They have dinner and go sightseeing, including visiting a major battlefield of the Falklands War. The film is shot like a documentary, so that the narrator Fabian, played by Fabian Stratas, is presented as a real person, as is Camila, played by Camila Heaney. Only at the closure do we discover the truth. As entertainment, the film could have been edited more tightly, but as an exploration of another mindset, it works admirably with its low budget.

PELLET [El Bola] (2000). Spanish features about life in the slums are often dry affairs, but this one directed by Achero Manas packs the punch of Rossellini at his best. Pablo, a 12-year-old boy, is El Bola, rolling from fights at school to a home life sometimes just as violent. His friends allow him to hang around, but mainly so that he can be the butt of their jokes. On one of the days he chooses to go to school, he meets Alfredo, a new student. From this point on, we see El Bola transform into a complete human being, rather than existing merely on pain. The performances by Juan Jose Ballesta as El Bola, and Pablo Galan, as Alfredo, create a world that is 100% credible. Achero Manas handles the relationship of a gay father and lesbian mother with genuine pathos, where other directors may have opted for genuine sleaze. The cinematography by Juan Carlos Gomez more than capably puts you there, in the center of squalor, like it or not.

WITCHES (1998). It's 'Praise the Lord' time once again folks, with this Nigerian Christian flick directed by Fred Amata. Hang onto your wighats, as it's a bumpy ride. Somewhere in the jungle, a coven of plastic nail-wearing witches feed a girl with chicken blood and place a ring on her finger, thereby initiating her into their family. In the city, a guy who asks a lady to move her car is zapped by squiggly black lines until his nose bleeds. The woman, the mother of Princess, the new witch, is hit by a car and then run over by a truck, and, yes, she dies. Princess turns a boy who slaps her face into a chicken, literally. 20 years later, the caption reads, Princess is working at a clothes boutique, but still has connections with her coven. Desmon, whose wife is pregnant, has a nocturnal visit by a witch who removes his wife's foetus. A baby is next found at the garbage dump by a nun and taken to the "Motherless Babies Home," as the sign reads. Meanwhile, our cackling coven transform into kittens and zoom into a Christian bus, propelled by laser beams coming outta their ass, and cause an accident (if not a fit of hysterical laughter). As Desmond realizes he must seek God's help if he is to get his baby back, the witches possess it causing him to morph into a rat! While this shot on video effort certainly sounds fun, the 102 minute running time is padded with tedious preaching, to break up the evil being displayed, I guess. Still, for those in a freaky state of mind, or for Christian film completists, this one is a winner.

SCOTT WILKINSON; London, England.
TARKAN: ALTIN MADALYON (1972). Between 1969 and 1973, the burgeoning Turkish film industry gave rise to a whole series of Tarkan movies translated to screen from Sezgin Burak's original comic book character. Similar in spirit to Italian peplums but with a splash of kung fu/spaghetti western traveling avenger in the main character, these films have a timeless, esoteric quality far outstripping their low budget origins. Directed by Mehmet Aslan and starring the enigmatic Kartal Tibet (a veteran of Turkish films in both acting and direction) as the titular anti-hero, TARKAN immediately kicks into overdrive, joyfully freewheeling from one ludicrous scene to the next. In an ominous shrine an evil king and his servant gleefully watch a lecherous old priest stab a naked nun and a stripper hanging from crosses. Their blood flows down prepared channels to cover a desiccated skeleton thus resurrecting the evil sorceress, Gosha (Eva Bender). They form a deadly alliance to usurp Attila, the king of a neighboring encampment, and their sworn enemy. With his faithful Alsatian-posing-as-a-wolf at his side, the noble savage Tarkan, himself raised by wolves, is fiercely loyal to Attila. When Attila's woman is brutally raped and killed and his son kidnapped by the Evil King, the homicidal side of Tarkan's usually gentle nature is provoked. We see the Evil King kill his own men by releasing a hidden trapdoor to a spiked pit then pull the head off a live dove (for real!) and feed it to his python. In fact he is such an overtly camp, giggling maniac that one can only wish Tarkan would forget about rescuing Attila's son and just run him through! Working in cahoots with his old friend Kulke, the leader of a troupe of accomplished acrobats, they scale the walls of the Evil King's castle using mysteriously convenient ropes. After a bold Tarzan-like snatch of Attila's son from the court guards, the son is violently chucked, in hilarious fashion, around the troupe like the ragdoll it so obviously is. As Tarkan fights off dozens of guards with his ridiculous "scything arc" swordplay, his wolf pulls a continuous thread from the Evil King's garment until his hairy bum is left exposed (!?). Eventually when Gosha reacquires Atilla's son through sorcery, Tarkan follows her to her mountain lair where she traps him in an enormous spider web and hysterically dances naked while hypnotizing him with her intense Barbara Steele eyes! In fact there are so many preposterous scenes in ALTIN MADALYON that it would be beyond the scope of this review to describe them all. Instead just kick back and enjoy a slice of dementia rarely seen on such a fantastic scale. [Many thanks to Pete Tombs for his incredible book, *Mondo Macabro*.]



CURSE OF THE ALPHA STONE (Something Weird Video; 1972). This heady little concoction presented by Jeffrey C. Hogue and directed by Stewart Malleon proudly transcends its low budget limitations, overripe performances and non-special effects to cast a powerful spell over its hapless viewer. Under the opening credits we are introduced to mild-mannered college professor, Abe Adams (Jim Scotlin), working earnestly in his laboratory. He portentously declares: "The resulting neutrino harmonics resonate with the alpha waves of the brain in the protoplasm of the body." Lecturing in genetics by day, his extracurricular activities involve experiments in ancient alchemy, high school chemistry equipment, bad lighting, and laboratory guinea pigs with enlarged testicles. As if that weren't enough to keep him occupied, barely minutes into the film, Adams' poor ignored girlfriend, Patricia, calls around for the first of a series of gratuitous sex scenes involving hideous interiors, slow motion photography and a pompous piano soundtrack. But it's when he succeeds, via arcing steel rods, in transforming a powdered chemical into a pulsating stone — the fabled "Philosophers Stone" — that the fun really begins. Casey, a gay black barfly, allows Adams to use him as his first human guinea pig by drinking a potion containing the powdered stone. Systematically he rejects his unconvincing fat boyfriend then graduates to stealing a female mannequin and "doing things" to it. His heterosexual urges spiral out of control turning him into a rapist in heat. Later on he rapes Patricia in a launderette, propping her unconscious body up on to an open washing machine, inserting a coin, and gleefully watching her limp form gyrate on the agitator(!?). Meanwhile the power of the Stone has turned Adams into a sex machine. In fact his maid is so aroused just cleaning his apartment that she suctions herself up and down with the vacuum cleaner while smoke billows out from under her dress(?!). Even his frigid landlady, also ex-wife of the college dean, Evelyn Parsons (Sandi Carey, NAUGHTY STEWARDESSES) succumbs to his power. "I'm having the most unusual sensations...Can you help me?" "I'll see what I can do." It all ends in tears when the dean's lesbian secretary calls around to berate Adams over his behavior with Evelyn and he accidentally screws her to death. Casey, in a fit of remorse, confronts Adams and vows to destroy the source of his power, but the Stone has a few tricks left. The now possessed Casey declares: "I am Alpha, I am beyond good and evil, I can take any form." Holy Shit! This is a one-of-a-kind cinematic absurdity guaranteed to induce an incredulous head shaking in all but the most seasoned of trash addicts.

TOM FITZGERALD; Los Angeles, CA.
SISTEMO L'AMERICA E TORNO [I Fix America and Return; Black is Beautiful] (1974). Spaghetti blaxploitation? Sign me up! Actually Nanni Loy's satire is ostensibly a vehicle for Italian comic Paolo Villaggio although there's more social commentary here then cheap laffs. Villaggio plays Giovanni, a bumbling Italian sports recruiter who heads to NYC in hopes of signing Ben (Sterling St. Jacques, Raymond's son), a basketball prodigy who also happens to be a Black Panther. Uh oh. After getting hipped to the latest soul handshakes, Gio meets his recruit at a funky party in Harlem where everybody's getting high and grooving in proper '70s fashion and fashions. Ben will go to Italy only if Gio gives to the Movement. To seal the deal they go to Detroit and so begins the education of our wide-eyed meatball as he bears witness to the ghetto with its bums, booze, busted buildings and broken-down lives. Visiting striking factory workers they're greeted by clenched fists, loudspeaker slogans and "Stick It To The Man" picket signs. Later, while they're donating to a Black Panther elementary school a riot suddenly breaks out and the city begins to burn, baby, burn. Caught up in the chaos, Ben tries to get a hurt comrade to the hospital but without insurance they're told to go to the state hospital 20 miles away. As the man lay dying, Gio is shocked and outraged. Welcome to America. Cut to Reno where the salt and pepper duo try their luck at finding Ben's ex-wife, then outta the blue they hook up with a caravan of longhairs and cruise up the California coast for a camp-out freak out. The next morning they all run over to a nearby mansion to watch the rich folk perform their daily ritual, which is standing at attention as the first rays of the sun trigger a weird patriotism machine that automatically runs old glory up a flagpole while the National Anthem blares over a P.A. system. (We're all well aware of this common American practice, right?) The freaks then spook the landed gentry by storming the estate naked. After a detour in New Orleans, the boys head back to NYC where Ben and his teammates interrupt their ball game to tell it like it is: "I don't like America and Black will be Black!" The crowd responds with a bottle thrown to the head. "You see? Is this the way of America? It's a motherfuckin' bitch!" Of course, all hell breaks loose and the whole place erupts into a full scale riot! The assembled stampede the court with fists and knives flying, even the goofy team mascot gets in a few licks, and when the dust finally settles we're left with a big bummer ending. Tommie Smith and John Carlos' controversial Black Power salutes during the '68 Olympics seems to be an inspiration for this decidedly downbeat comedy. It's always a trip to gaze into the funhouse mirror "old Europe" holds up when

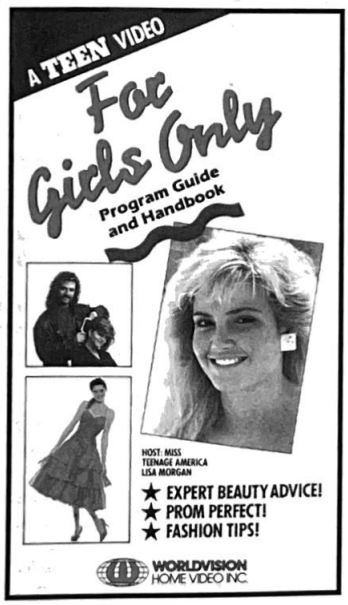
their sights are turned to the dark soul of our Land of the Free. And even though nobody's smashing babies against the wall, with its racial tension, Black nationalism and "violence is American as apple pie" attitude, you could almost say it's ADDIO ZIO TOM's red-headed stepchild. Almost.

THE FLASHER [Forbidden Under the Censorship of the King] (1972). More Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers than Mitchell Brothers, this zonked out relic from the long gone days of gonzo porno is light years away from today's assembly line suck-'n'-fuck fests. Demented, Peter Max-with-the-D.T.'s cartoons start things off as solarized sperms, chickens and multicolored spinning cocks dance about in a spectacle resembling the results of an animation student's speed-fueled all-nighter attempts to make his morning deadline. We then meet Spencer "The Super Sperm," a rhymin', jive talkin' Greek Chorus of the Id who occasionally chimes in on the film's action. The plot? While researching for his "study of abnormal sex," Mervin (perennial pecker-for-hire Harry Reems) has placed an ad in the paper looking for willing deviants. First, he finds a horny hippie with a sweet tooth who gets her rocks off by turning herself into a big sticky human sundae. Then there's the creepy foot fetishist who works at a shoe store so he can fondle, sniff and lick women's feet then go off to the back room to, uh, pull on his foot measurer. Later, we spy a maladjusted mortician who fancies the occasional necro tango with nubile newly deads. Meanwhile, Mervin picks up a foxy lady at a singles bar only to wind up playing "The Crying Game" if yah know whatta mean. Between sexcapades, he buys himself a pet "monkey" which is actually just a naked hippie freak on a leash who looks like a lost member of the John Waters tribe. Throughout the hardcore hijinks, we get randomly spliced in footage of a gangly furball flasher and his exhibitionism expert teacher (Marshall Anker, the sheriff from LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT) on a dead of winter morning in Central Park giving their trenchcoats a work out by practicing their craft on trees, statues, even a mother and baby. The big climax finds Mervin and all his subjects at his pad smoking weed, bouncing around on the water bed and indulging in an in-the-buff buffet laid out on the food fetish chickadee. It don't get more '70s than this, folks. A pornographic cave painting that's as primitive as could be with scenes jump-cutting back and forth with graceless abandon from one crash pad to the next. Surprisingly this quickie smoker boasts a fully realized original soundtrack of moog-folk-funk by Rubert "Pina Colada Song" Holmes that's more polished than the flick itself. Keep an eye out for cocksmith workhorse Jamie Gillis who punches in as a sadist (natch).

THE DREAM OF HAMISH MOSE (1973). OK, I haven't seen this one. Nobody has. And that's a crying shame 'cause this surreal black western was the only directorial effort by the late Cameron Mitchell and it stars America's sweetheart O.J. Simpson! "The Juice" leads a troop of black Civil War soldiers carrying a dead comrade's corpse to a sacred burial ground. There's scant dialogue, instead Mitchell's rambling voice-over narration babbles on while the cast stares off into space. An example: "These eyes have seen the glory of the coming...and the going...the alpha...the omega...and the inbetweena." Mitchell also stars as a sinister, whacked-out Confederate cracker patterned after General Sherman. A true Tinseltown oddball who believed in U.F.O.s, had psychic surgery and was reportedly a big acidhead, Mitchell claimed God told him to do it. Financing the whole enterprise himself, Cam had to cut corners. His solution for a short supply of real Native Americans? Dress up some black guys in Indian garb and cover their faces with hoods. Off the set, things weren't going much better. The editor lost his marbles and "shot off his wife's breasts" before blowing his brains out. The cash poor project seemed doomed for the start and after a pricey divorce leading to a bankruptcy, Mitchell had to shelve this labor of love before its completion. According to veteran movie and TV actor Philip Pine, who somehow came into owning the rights to the film, it was a mess full of weird footage (donkeys shitting, with close-ups of "the steam rising off their excrement"). I recently found out Pine sold off the rights a few years ago to an unknown entity and that's where the trail grows cold for a lost film that simply must be found.

ADAM GROVES; El Segundo, CA.

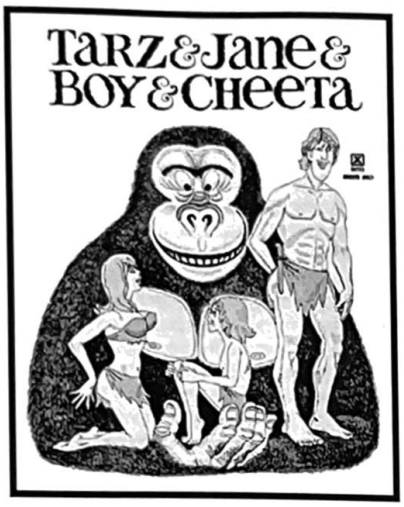
FOR GIRLS ONLY (1988). No, I'm not a girl, but I'm sure this is something everyone wants to see: an instructional video for teenage girls on how to be cool, circa 1988! The robotic host Lisa Morgan, a.k.a. "Miss Teenage America" (who couldn't possibly look more vacant), instructs chicks on how to prepare for a formal date, select a cool watch (according to this video, guys place a lot of stock in watches), apply press-on nails, get a manicure, et cetera. She also advises gals to sprinkle their conversations with select foreign words and phrases to impress people: Ciao, Joie de Vivre, Sayonara, Esprit De Corps and Gung Ho (for which Lisa gives as an example: "My best friend is Gung Ho with school spirit!"). A ring company flack shows up to address a group of beaming Stepford Teens, hawking class rings that are "meant to show your personality...and I can tell you've got one!" (enunciated with all the enthusiasm of Steven Wright on downers) Rounding things out, make-up artist Mike Michaels, looking deeply stoned, demonstrates how to get a look that's "in," with rhinestones around the eyes, super-frizzy hair and Coffin Joe nails. I'm just glad the tape only runs an hour (though it feels twice as long). Best of all are the end credits, containing the warning: "Viewers using the information contained herein do so at their own risk"(!).



THE ARGUMENT (1971/98). A fascinating 11-minute short by the late Donald Cammell. It remained unfinished until three years after Cammell's 1995 suicide, having been shot in Utah alongside his supreme masterpiece PERFORMANCE. Editor Frank Mazzola deserves much of the credit for THE ARGUMENT — he pieced together and exhibited it after discovering the abandoned footage in his garage — as does cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond, whose colors and textures are truly eye-popping. Exploring issues of religion and sexual identity, it centers on a documentary filmmaker adrift in a vast desert containing a number of distinctly phallic and nipple-like rock formations. He gets into an argument with a chatty, scantily clad witch over their respective beliefs and, by extension, the nature of masculinity and the artifice of filmmaking (the filmmaker's always admonishing his nemesis to "stick to the script!"). Sounds heavy going, but Cammell's touch is a light and surprisingly witty one; the male protagonist at one point demonstrates his god's superiority by holding up "the sublime finger" — the sublime middle finger! In addition, a bevy of distinctly Cammellian visual effects accompanies the characters' ruminations: superimpositions, split screens, dissolves, et cetera, resulting in a wildly psychedelic, free-form narrative and a fitting summation of Donald Cammell's career-long cinematic interests.

AMERICAN TABOO (1983). A now-obscure Oregon-set indie that won a "Student" Academy Award. I assume Academy voters were swayed by first (and only)-time director Steve Lustgarten's overwhelming self-importance, as I found this humorless film to be amateurish and mind-numbingly dull. It's about a thirtyish photographer who becomes obsessed with a teenage girl after catching a glimpse of her ass in tight jeans; the girl, fully aware of his interest, sets out to seduce him (by wearing a miniskirt and go-go boots!) and before long both are in over their heads. The characters spend most of the running time yakking inanely (sample dialogue: "I felt I could see through you to your very soul"), and the rest tromping around forests and beaches to the accompaniment of cheesy synthesizer music. There's no sex until the final twenty minutes (much of it "artfully" intercut with close-ups of dew dripping from tree branches), thus negating the inexplicable blurb on the video box proclaiming it "sexually bolder than most American films dare." For that matter, the video cover promises much that the film doesn't deliver: if there was a "mad vortex of sexual passion" I missed it, nor did I see anyone "open themselves to the powerful hidden demons lurking within their own psyches." I'd recommend the similarly themed 1986 flick THE GIRL in place of this.

LIFETIME CONTRACT (1986). Evangelical crapola! In this 55-minute loaf, a dorky teen is visited by a heavenly angel and an emissary for the Devil, each with a "special interest" in the twerp. Why? Your guess is as good as mine! The film was made in the eighties, so its makers naturally portray God's angel as a suit-wearing yuppie and his antagonist as a slimy Ron Jeremy wannabe. God himself is a sweet old coot who wanders through a featureless white landscape and Satan a cackling sleaze who pontificates amidst tacky red lighting. The big S manages to infiltrate the minds of the protagonist's teachers, inspiring them to teach sinful subjects like human sexuality and — gasp! — alternative lifestyles! Needless to say, our confused "hero" ultimately follows the right path, finding salvation through a pubescent Bible study group whom his satanic emissary (accurately) brands "geeks and nerds." As expected, the film is hopelessly inept in every department, demonstrating how little its makers know about the way real people behave; particularly embarrassing are the scenes depicting "normal" high school life, with fifth-rate teen performers saying things like "gag me to the max," "I just go with the flow" and "I'm into apathy." Addressing the camera, the central character asks: "Do you go to school with people like this?" Um, NO!



TARZUN AND THE VALLEY OF LUST and TARZ & JANE, CHEETA & BOY (Something Weird Video; 1970/1975).

When a movie kicks off with unapologetic (albeit fake) bestiality, you know you're in store for an old-fashioned sleaze-a-thon, and coincidentally, that's precisely how both of these seedy, penny-ante, '70s erotic Tarzan knock-offs begin — with Jane getting ape-raped. Let the 'fun' begin!

Our first entry, writer-director W. P. Mogul's TARZUN AND THE VALLEY OF LUST stars Duane Prodd as our blonde jungle king, who looks more like a down-on-his-luck surfer; grunts "Cowabunga" or "Tarzun hungry," before boning Jayne (Chris Robin); stumbles about the veldt in a droopy loin cloth; and swings from trees that conveniently have hardware store ropes attached to 'em. When Jayne takes a nude dip in a puddle, she catches the eye of a moth-eaten monkey, who promptly rapes her. Even after Tarzun rescues his mate, that randy simian remains obsessed with Jayne. In other subplots, Tarzun injures his groin and a topless black chick "makes Tarzun well" with a doggy-style remedy, even as Jayne is captured by natives.

The sex scenes never reach hardcore heights, but they come damned close, and the whole 53-minute endeavor is crude, stupid and wondrously pathetic, such as when they intercut grainy National Geographic animal footage — big cats, rhinos, flamingos(?) — to convince us that this wasn't shot in some California backyard. Plus I felt truly sorry for the black guys they hired to play the native Africans, and it's hard to believe that anyone could be that desperate for cash. Sell a kidney instead. It's less demeaning.

TARZUN was simply crude and filthy, but TARZ & JANE, CHEETA & BOY is a cornier concoction that mixes bishop-flogging sex scenes with ridiculous dialogue ("Shit, boy. Tarz tired of this jungle crap.") and physical comedy that makes Benny Hill look sophisticated (when Tarz uses an ear of "jungle corn" as a dildo, popcorn bursts from the gal's twat). Tarz ("Elmo Brix" a.k.a. Patrick Wright) sports a wig swiped from a drag queen, Jane ("Silver Fox" a.k.a. Tally Wright) stumbles about in three-inch heels, and their "Boy" is pushing 30, but has the sexual knowledge of a 5-year-old Mormon. When a crocodile bites off Tarz's "dork," the Jungle King is depressed, Jane looks to Boy for sexual relief, and they all journey to dangerous Wango Wango country in search of a huge new penis. "Cheetah" (a guy in a baggy ape suit) follows 'em on this trek, making rude gestures.

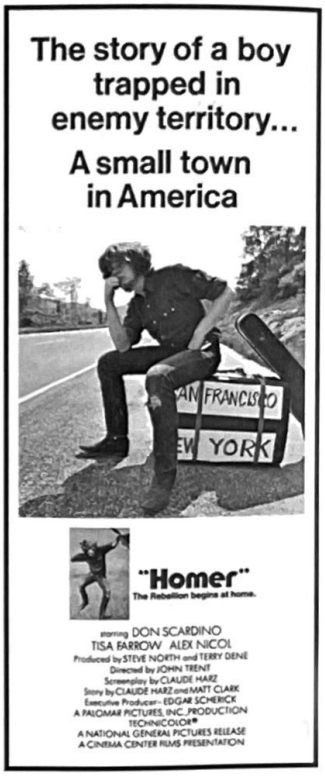
The only actor who shows any enthusiasm with this gig is ever-reliable Georgina Spelvin as Wanda, a white chick on safari, who has stolen the Wango Wango's treasure with the aid of her fruity assistant. Although there's lots of nudity, whenever anything gets too racy, the hardcore bits suddenly switch to solarized footage, and at 72 minutes, there are far too many tedious stretches. Few of the participants wanted to take credit for this crap (the director is listed as "Itza Fine"), but at least the financiers had enough dough to build a makeshift tree house and a rubber crocodile with flapping jaws, in addition to renting an old sedated tiger for Tarz to wrestle.

HOMER (SuperHappyFun; 1970).

Counterculture films from the late-'60s and early-'70s often followed characters on a voyage of self-discovery. This small-scale drama took a slightly different route, by centering on a frustrated teenager and the events leading up to his decision to ditch his drab small town. There's potential in the idea, but director John Trent (who later produced DEATHDREAM) transforms it into a preachy, obvious, often deadening tale, with a thoroughly unsympathetic title character.

When we first meet teenaged Homer (Don Scardino), he has his guitar in hand, with plans to ditch his ultra-square farming community of Schomberg, Wisconsin and hitchhike to groovy San Francisco. But instead, he's unable to snag a ride (except from the local sheriff) and ends up back at his parents' house. You see, Homer is a big rebel in a small pond; he refuses to cut his hair, dreams of being a musician, and it's easy to understand Homer's frustrations (particularly once you get a glimpse of his straight-laced, clean-cut, über-patriotic, George-Bush-wet-dream home town). But the kid is also a painfully naive nitwit, and if he had to actually survive on his own — instead of leeching off his parents — he'd end up sobbing in a fetal position.

Not a lot happens in the film's first half. He shares a few drinks and a joint with buddy Eddie, who's being shipped overseas and lets Homer take care of his motorcycle while he's off killing VC. Homer also plays with his band at a "Good Luck Soldier" shindig, and since this is a 'message' movie, you can place bets on Eddie's eventual fate. In the second half, Homer's uptight, one-dimensional dad (longtime character actor Alex Nicol) pressures him to grow up and go to college (from my experience, those tasks are mutually exclusive). One unintentionally funny highlight is Homer's one-man anti-war protest, which has the townsfolk seething. Although the sequence's objective is admirable, its execution is pure sap.


The story of a boy trapped in enemy territory...
A small town in America
"Homer"
The Rebellion begins at home.
starring DON SCARDINO
TISA FARROW ALEX NICOL
Produced by STEVE NORTH and TERRY DENE
Directed by JOHN TRENT
Screenplay by CLAUDE HARZ
Story by CLAUDE HARZ and MATT CLARK
Executive Producer: EDGAR SCHERICK
A PALOMAR PICTURES, INC. PRODUCTION
TECHNICOLOR®
A NATIONAL GENERAL PICTURES RELEASE
A CINEMA CENTER FILMS PRESENTATION

This is tame stuff that stays safely within its 'GP' rating, with Scardino (who went from starring in SQUIRM, to directing episodes of LAW & ORDER) seeming like any nondescript slacker, and Tisa Farrow (ZOMBIE) making her film debut as Homer's cute but airheaded girlfriend Laurie. Claude Harz's script is insipid, Laszlo G. George's cinematography is awash in heavyhanded compositions, and one of the few redeeming aspects is its soundtrack, which includes Led Zeppelin, Cream, The Byrds' "Turn Turn Turn," Buffalo Springfield's "Bluebird," and Steve Miller Band's "Brave New World" — in addition to Scardino warbling a trio of so-so tunes that he penned himself.

HAMMERHEAD (Shocking Videos; 1968).

In the wake of James Bond's cinematic mega-success (adjusted for inflation, THUNDERBALL grossed $450 million; 'nuff said), bastard offspring such as HAMMERHEAD were plentiful throughout the late-'60s. Based on the first in a series of pulpy super-agent novels by James Mayo, this nearly forgotten entry doesn't deliver any surprises, and makes a major gaff by hiring swarthy but bland ex-BEN CASEY Vince Edwards (who has even less charm than George Lazenby) as Charles Hood, a globehopping American secret agent who's on a European mission filled with sultry ladies and one-dimensional villains.

NOTHING EVER HIT YOU LIKE 'HAMMERHEAD'
Vince Edwards as Charles Hood and Judy Geeson as his dishy British bird, in the track down that hurls you from London to Lisbon... from orgy of violence to climax of excitement!
VINCE EDWARDS · JUDY GEESON
co-starring as Charles Hood the girl from TO SIR WITH LOVE
PETER VAUGHAN · DIANA DORS · MICHAEL BATES
BEVERLY ADAMS · PATRICK CARGILL
Screenplay by WILLIAM BAST and HERBERT BAKER
Based on the novel by JAMES MAYO · Associate Producer ANDREW DONALLY Produced by IRVING ALLEN
Directed by DAVID MILLER TECHNICOLOR®

Before the storyline slides into mediocrity, it begins on an offbeat note, with a hippie Art-In (complete with smashed mannequins, a giant woman sandwich and a police riot finale) under the opening credits. Welcome to swingin' '60s London, with Hood discovering a half-dressed British babe named Sue (19-year-old Judy Geeson) in his backseat. Hood's current mission involves a germ-o-phobic super-criminal named Hammerhead, who "deals in depravity" — including narcotics, gambling and Far East brothels — and even gets his own pseudo-GOLDFINGER theme song!

Hood plans to use a cache of rare pornography to get close to this lecherous fiend (played by Peter Vaughan). Meanwhile, cheeky Sue is smitten with over-twice-her-age Hood and begins to stalk him, from England to Lisbon (where most of the film is set), and even onto Hammerhead's private yacht. Despite all of its rampant clichés, the plot barrels along, with the trail leading to a much-desired reel of film, Hood

and Sue trapped in a coffin together, top secret plans, and an implausible kidnapping switcheroo.

Unlike Bond, Helm, Flint, or even the men from U.N.C.L.E., Hood lacks secret-agent gadgets and prefers fisticuffs instead. He's a 100% American bruiser, and his white short-sleeved dress shirt certainly doesn't make him a fashion plate! And although Geeson was the epitome of the mod cutie in flicks like HERE WE GO ROUND THE MULBERRY BUSH, this is one of her more annoying gigs. The supporting cast includes Diana Dors as a nightclub owner and future-Darth Vader David Prowse as Hammerhead's lunkhead bodyguard, while Beverly Adams (DEVIL'S ANGELS) gets some of the best moments as a gyrating Hammerhead-bimbo named Ivory. Director David Miller began his career in '30s Hollywood, cranking out workman-like studio slop, and this feature is equally blunt and unstylish. Although it's aided by colorful photography and a light coating of flower power ambiance — which gives it a timely (as well as instantly dated) facade — HAMMERHEAD is best reserved for tolerant spy-genre fanatics.

THIS AIRLINE SERVES THREE WILD DISHES
TAKE YOUR CHOICE
"I'm Toby, fly me as far as you want."
"I'm Sherry, buy a ticket and I come free!"
"I'm Andrea, my foreign lay-overs are very stimulating."
METROCOLOR
SEE STEWARDESSES BATTLE KUNG FU KILLERS!
Fly Me
PAT ANDERSON • LENORE KASDORF • LYLLAH TORENA • NAOMI STEVENS
A NEW WORLD PICTURES RELEASE

FLY ME (Witching Hour Video: 1973).

If you're in the mood for some old school cheap thrills, this amusingly-idiotic New World hybrid delivers a mix of gorgeous gals, gratuitous nudity, martial arts, limp comic relief, Asian backdrops, and non-stop groovy '70s style. It begins like any typical sex-comedy from that era: pick an occupation (teacher, candy striper, cheerleader, prison inmate) and then follow several barely-clothed knock-outs through an assortment of shacked-up misadventures. In this instance it's a trio of sultry stewardesses, and in the hands of Filipino filmmaker Cirio Santiago — directing one of his first US drive-in features — the cheap sex and dumb laughs are interspersed with impressively sordid plot twists and ridiculous kung fu action!

You know you're getting a schlocky blast from the past when Dick Miller pops up in the opening sequence as a cabbie who gives Toby (Pat Anderson, SUMMER SCHOOL TEACHERS) a lift to the airport, while she strips naked in his backseat to change into her stewardess uniform. Toby is new to the job, but perpetually horny co-workers Andrea (Lenore Kasdorf) and Sherry (Lyllah Torena) will show her the ropes, as they all jet off to Hong Kong.

Toby quickly meets a handsome doctor (Richard Young), but her grating, over-protective, food-obsessed, Italian-stereotype mom (Naomi Stevens) is always crimping his style, by following the lovebirds from HK to Tokyo to the Philippines. In more serious (but equally mindless) subplots, Sherry is kidnapped by Asian scum and Andrea's Chinese boyfriend has mysteriously vanished. It's also fortunate that Andrea is a martial arts master, since she's continually being attacked — including a blind dude with a killer-dart-shooting cane! Also look for Vic Diaz as a (no surprise) dirty cop.

The trail eventually leads to drug smuggling, chained-up sex slaves, plus a righteous, revenge-of-the-whores finale that's too cheesy to be believed. And all of these ridiculous plot complications are crammed into barely 71 minutes, amidst some of the lamest fight choreography in film history. Cinematographer Philip (Felipe) Sacdalan had a lot of experience with this type of trash, having shot THE HOT BOX, WOMEN IN CAGES and Santiago's TNT JACKSON, and while I'm pretty sure FLY ME doesn't appear on their current resumes, Joe Dante is credited as dialogue director and Jonathan Demme as 2nd-unit director (in other words, the opening US-lensed scenes?). Whatever their exact contributions were, they helped create an outlandish chunk of first-rate exploitation.

END OF AUGUST AT THE HOTEL OZONE [Konec Srpna V Hotelu Ozon] (SuperHappyFun; 1967).

With its desolate backdrops and primarily female cast, Czech director Jan Schmidt attempted to put a new spin on the post-apocalyptic sci-fi genre. But this is no dopey LAST WOMAN ON EARTH wannabe. It's a somber, introspective vision of life in the aftermath, and though this particular print lacked English subtitles, it was still relatively easy to follow.

Years after most of human civilization has been wiped out by nuclear war, a small group of females — eight young women, and one matronly leader — roam the cold and dreary landscape, past decimated buildings and across the countryside, scavenging for food and fuel. They aren't the smartest bunch of survivalists though, such as when they toss a box of bullets into a nearby fire, so it's pure luck that any of them are still alive.

There's almost no story, and we simply watch these gals caring for their horses and searching through empty ruins. They also set up camp near a large crumbling building, and when the floor isn't caving in under their feet, they notice strange symbols on the walls. In the final half-hour, they finally reach the once-palatial Hotel Ozone, where the only other humans — an elderly couple — reside amidst the trappings of now-defunct civilization, such as useless television sets and a hand-cranked gramophone with only one recording ("Roll Out the Barrel"). They're invited to stay and, in the process, enjoy a brief taste of a past which most of the women are too young to remember.

Alhough the women are a bit disheveled and unwashed, they're still a rather alluring bunch of strong, independent ragamuffins, hardened by their wilderness lifestyle — whether it's matter-of-factly shooting a dog that's been following them, or hungrily slaughtering and butchering a cow in unflinching close-up. Unfortunately, any slim moment of hopefulness is dashed within minutes, and the ending is a jolt of chilly despair. Written by Pavel Jurácek (VOYAGE TO THE END OF THE UNIVERSE) and featuring a score by famed Czech composer Jan Klusák, this ultra-bleak tale is sure to leave any viewer depressed for the remainder of the day.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT (Something Weird Video; 1960).

Fueled by sex, violence, religion, blackmail, and unexpected twists, this Texas-lensed B-movie pulp from director-producer Irvin Berwick (whose schlock career ranged from THE MONSTER OF PIEDRAS BLANCAS to MALIBU BEACH) is a lurid, dime-store novel come to life. It's the type of fabulously seedy melodrama where one drink can turn a good man into an animal, women are slapped around for their own good, and leggy blondes have even less scruples than an Enron CEO.

Terry James (Lyn Statten) is one hell of a woman, and late one night, while out driving with her boyfriend Ted Mathews (Jonathan Kidd), they're involved in a terrible car crash. Terry is knocked unconscious, the driver of the other vehicle is messed up and Ted, suffering from amnesia, wanders away from the scene and joins up with a traveling evangelist. Cut to: seven years later, and Ted — using the name "Tad Morgan" — is a fire-and-brimstone preacher, who rivets parishioners, heals sickly children, raises money for a pediatric hospital, and still has no memory of his old identity.

YOU BE THE JUDGE!
DID THEY VIOLATE THE
7th Commandment
THE TRAGIC STORY OF AN ILLICIT LOVE!
JONATHAN KIDD and LYN STATTEN
JOHN HARMON FRANK ARVIDSON
JOHN CARPENTER
A CROWN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES RELEASE

Terry, on the other hand, is shacking up with an abusive, lowlife barfly (John Harmon), and when she discovers that her old flame is now a deep-pocketed man of god, she wants both money and revenge. But after she blackmails Tad out of a wad of dough (by convincing him that he's guilty of murder!) and blows through the windfall in record time, Terry decides to trick Tad into marriage, so she can continue milking this cash cow.

The plot becomes increasingly sordid as greed, lust and past sins cut a destructive path through a good man's life — proving that even the most moral guy can get pushed to the brink. Though it obviously wasn't a costly production, the photography by Robert C. Jessup (who later moved onto Larry Buchanan slop like MARS NEEDS WOMEN) makes good use of real locations, with credible performances from the cast of unknowns. But the real scene-stealer is Statten, who plays the bad girl to the hilt — lounging about her cesspool apartment in sexy lingerie, mocking the Scriptures and even spending her 'wedding night' with another man. What a charmer!

MIKE SULLIVAN; Mountaintop, PA.
HAMMERSMITH IS OUT (1972). I've often wondered if the late Peter Ustinov had regrets over turning down the role of Inspector Clouseau. The fame and critical adulation Peter Sellers received from the character had to hit Ustinov hard, especially when he was prepping Beau Bridges for his big farting scene in HAMMERSMITH IS OUT. But please don't pity the man, it's not as if Goethe burst from his grave and forced Ustinov to turn his Faust legacy into a half-assed Richard Burton, Liz Taylor vanity project. A young clearly embarrassed Bridges plays Billy Breedlove, a hateful, nose picking orderly who assists demonic inmate Hammersmith (Burton) in an escape from mental institution. As payback Hammersmith vows to make Breedlove "strong and rich and rich and strong" by killing wealthy businessman and then insinuating Breedlove into their positions...over and over again...for 90 minutes. Of course the cops are oblivious to these obvious murders so it's up to a bored psychiatrist (Ustinov) to waddle through Hammersmith's homicidal wake before Breedlove becomes President of the world or something. It's really hard to care about this boring turgid mess because no one in front of or behind the camera cared either. The screenplay is repetitive and overflows with ultra lame gags such as a topless all girl rock group called The Tits. The film even denies us the simple pleasure of watching the trademarked histrionics of its duo of stars. Burton doesn't even bother to act, he reads his dialog as if he were reading stereo instructions aloud. Meanwhile, Taylor is repeatedly out acted by her ratty Dolly Parton wig. Heavy handed and oddly humorless for a comedy, HAMMERSMITH IS OUT is nowhere near the high camp blast most bad movie books would lead you to believe.

H2S (1969). I'm always perplexed by the type of actors the Italian film industry consider to be bankable. During the industry's heyday were producers caught in vicious bidding wars, frantically trying to undercut each other in an attempt to acquire such lucrative marquee names as Terry Bradshaw and that one girl from Blossom — not the girl who played Blossom but the girl who played her best friend — for their latest giallo? Possibly, but it's more likely that pastaland filmmakers were just desperate for any recognizable name, whether they were right for the movie or not. Case in point; Lionel Stander in H2S. The gruff character actor was completely wrong for this surrealistic pop art satire. Fortunately, the film is so thoroughly bizarre you won't even notice this slight bit of miscasting. Taking place in a future world which resembles Epcot Center by way of Roy Lichtenstein, H2S tells the story of a naive country boy (Dennis Gilmore, who looks like Arch Hall Jr.'s ugly kid brother) who stumbles onto a strange university where the faculty (led by a perpetually grinning Stander) represses its student body with a form of religion that seems to be a crude variation on Scientology. But just when it seems as if Gilmore will be caught in the middle of a student uprising the film completely switches gears when he accidentally shoots a giggling black guy on a bicycle and runs off to the Swiss Alps with some random woman where they sleep in a giant frying pan. Confused? Well, just wait until the finale which mixes Rube Goldberg-esque sex devices with a marriage to an elderly female impersonator. From the opening depiction of the effects that overpopulation has on lab mice to the campus radicals making bird calls during a sit-in, H2S is a lovably indecipherable slice of '60s dementia. In spite of all the craziness the film was prescient enough to predict the use of mannequins as furniture and the fact that Stander went on to build unitard wearing robots in his basement.

I WANNA DRIVE YOU INSANE (1997). Blatant foreign rip-offs of American hit movies have delighted lovers of irony for many years. Despite the obvious kitsch factor these films are rarely anything more than "so bad it's good" embarrassments. With that in mind a Japanese copy of AFTER HOURS made by a first time director sounds about as appealing as a Turkish BATTLEFIELD EARTH. Surprisingly, that isn't the case. As in the film that inspired it, I WANNA DRIVE YOU INSANE follows an uber-geeky office worker's descent into an urban nightmare. As this sufferin' bastard struggles to get home he's slowly driven crazy by a pushy dominatrix on the subway, an abusive restaurant owner who hangs from his kitchen ceiling like a marionette and a cheerful schoolgirl who blithely injects heroin into her breast. Just when you think the film can't get any stranger it turns into a musical with the characters breaking into song at the most inappropriate moments. As outrageous as all of this sounds, director Yoshimasa Ishibashi never succumbs to high camp idiocy. Instead the film is grounded by understated performances and stark black-and-white photography. Barely over an hour and occasionally derivative, I WANNA DRIVE YOU INSANE is Japanese art-house weirdness at its most lovably incomprehensible.

COLOR OF LIFE: THE VERMILION PLEASURE NIGHT MOVIE (2002). After the critical success of I WANNA DRIVE YOU INSANE, Ishibashi was offered a chance to develop a television show for the Tokyo Broadcasting System. The surprising result was THE VERMILION PLEASURE NIGHT, an aberrant sketch comedy show with a cast primarily made up of women. The program became a major hit in Japan and spawned the equally successful mannequin sitcom OH! MIKEY. Mysteriously, the show was pulled from the airwaves after a brief six month run. In response, a "best of" compilation was quickly cobbled together and released to theaters under the ungainly title COLOR OF LIFE: THE VERMILION PLEASURE NIGHT MOVIE. Regardless of its impressive pedigree, COLOR OF LIFE is a major disappointment resembling a shallow version of MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS. Almost none of the sketches have any satiric bite and seems to follow the adage, "if you can't be funny be weird." Of course it could be argued that the humor might only appeal to Japanese audiences but I doubt even they would be amused by sketches involving clumsy aliens, shrieking zombies and wrestling disembodied heads. Although flawed and disjointed it's by no means a failure. There are plenty of smart concepts like a cooking show for cannibals presented by a charmingly deadpan hostess and a hypnotic animated sequence involving a speeding ticket. Besides, it's hard to hate any Asian film that refuses to portray women as rape victims or silent unstoppable killing machines. Like most anthology films COLOR OF LIFE is pretty hit or miss and almost unbearably lame. It's apparent that Vermilion must be the color of mediocrity as well.

STOOGEMANIA (1985). From the same company that gave us THE GARBAGE PAIL KIDS MOVIE comes this appallingly shitty cash-in. Josh Mostel (Zero's talent-barren son) stars as an all-too-believable fan boy whose obsession over The Three Stooges causes him to lose his wife and end up in a "De-Stooging Center," where antics one might presumably call "zany" ensue. I suppose the popularity of The Jump in the Saddle Band's "Curly Shuffle" was enough to garner a feature length rip-off because there's no other reason for this movie to exist. About 65 percent of the running time is made up of clips from weak public domain shorts that expose the audience to dangerous levels of Shemp. The remaining 35 percent works simply as an excuse to get to the clips which means there's a lot of footage of people watching TV. Occasionally the film will stumble upon an interesting idea (such as the hooker who caters to Stooge fans) but mostly it's just unendurable dreck. Cheap looking and painfully unfunny, STOOGEMANIA is the cinematic equivalent to pissing on a grave.

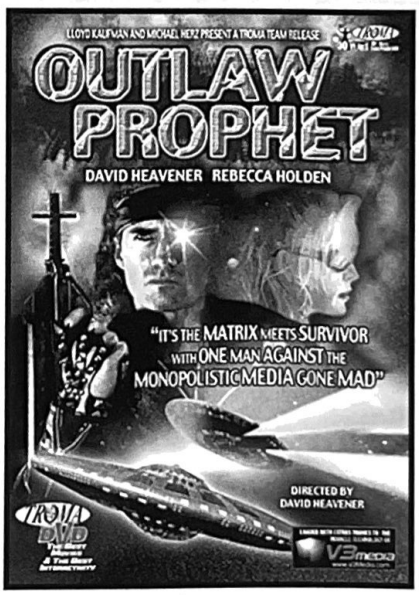
BRETT TAYLOR; Knoxville, TN.

HOWARD GOLDBERG'S APPLE PIE (1975). A bearded, bald rich guy with phony eyebrows called "The Falcon" (Tony Azito) goes to a hotel where a young black-haired Calvert DeForest (years before appearing as Larry "Bud" Melman on LATE NIGHT WITH DAVID LETTERMAN) teaches him to play Clue. In other exciting developments, two men discuss radishes. Just when this scene is getting intolerably boring, we go to the past to be bored by flashbacks. Back in his youth the Falcon (who dislikes porn because it doesn't make him cry) was just plain Jackie, and lived in a fancy house with his folks. He looked the same but with a toupee. So why continue to watch? Because young Jackie's father is played by that legendary crank, Brother Theodore! As Dad rants to Mom (Ruth Kaplan) about women, it's clear he's provided his own dialogue. He prefers horses to women because "a horse is more human." Jackie fakes his own kidnapping, leading to the funniest scene as Brother Theo calls the kidnappers (so he thinks) and gets sarcastic. He then drives around in his Cadillac convertible, madly singing what sounds like an Indian war song. The kidnapping affair over, our youth mouths banalities on the phone: "I live day to day...I give tit for tat." He whines about living in "relative deprivation" in his posh home. He talks for what seems like hours before dressing up in an idiotic, low-budget costume and skulking about with a knife. He sneaks into his parents' room, but surprise! It's all a play and the room is actually a stage. Huh? Surreal or just stupid? You be the judge. The joke's on Jackie and he runs away. Sorry, no more Brother Theodore. Off Jackie goes to the street, where he bothers a painter, talking about going to art school. He tells another stranger about meeting Bette Midler. Yawn. And other unrehearsed verité footage with real random strangers. Next our hero threatens to jump to his death, saying he's tired of "wearing black to be heavy." By now, we're tired of it too. He talks to his reflection about self-indulgence, a very relevant topic here. A mysterious woman (Veronica Hamel) in a feathered outfit shows up and makes her face disappear. Then Jackie and a young lady (Olie) eat at the fancy Le Passy restaurant, allowing us verité footage of rich people eating. Two people recognize him but he puts them on by speaking Hebrew. He and his date have a none-too-charming food fight. It all ends up with an impromptu number with street dancers (including a pre-FAME Irene Cara) boogying to a funk instrumental by a pre-fame Daryl Hall and John Oates. It's all a slice of life in the Big Apple, hence APPLE PIE, get it? And who's this writer-director Howard Goldberg? My guess is he was a pretentious young art school-type, just like Jackie. The last shot is a picture of a symbolic...no, not an apple pie. A cookie. With skyscrapers on it.

LOST (1983). Ex-Gidget Sandra Dee vanished from the public eye in the '70s. Her comeback arrived in the early '80s in the form of...an Al Adamson movie??! What was she trying to do, finish off her career for good? If so she chose well. Looking older than her 41 years Dee comes off as amateur here, being stuck with a director who clearly has no interest in directing his actors. But she tries hard and brings some personality to the role of a mother who travels to the rural West with second husband Don Stewart, daughter Sheila Newhouse, and Benji-knockoff Skipper the Dog. Little Newhouse hates it in the country. The kids at school mock her when she rides a burro to school because "This is horse country." So she lashes out at stepfather Stewart, "My dad would never do this. He has feelings. I hate you!" Thus she and Skipper run away to the desert where they're menaced by fake lightning. A party is formed to find the little girl. These manly men decide to wait till morning to look, in the meantime standing around drinking coffee. One of them thoughtfully reminiscences within Dee's hearing range about finding another little girl who'd been mauled by a grizzly. Next morning Newhouse awakens and asks the brilliant question, "Is this where we are?" Back home, Dee paints and looks out the window. Members of the search party talk to each other but you can't hear what they say since the music's running wild. Fortunately a grizzled Jack Elam shows up in Daniel Boone gear (in a *dogskin* cap, no less) to bring some much-needed color amidst the boredom. Delighted to learn Newhouse is a full eleven years old he exclaims "I got me a near-woman." Yikes! Luckily all he really wants to do is bore her with tales of grizzly-fightin' and such. Disappointed that this young girl doesn't appreciate the joys of rugged civilization or agree with his view of the pointlessness of civilization, Elam angrily tells her, "Your folks is fools" for wanting to live within society and offers to let the 11-year-old stay at his cabin. Yikes again! But she prefers to be reunited with her folks, leading to a tearful reunion with our little mutt running in slow-motion just like Benji used to do. It takes a special kind of talent to coach child actors, and Adamson ain't got it. A frightening moment comes as a terrified piglet squeals in fear as Newhouse screams angrily and chases it. Ken Curtis appears as a wise old man who compares farming to love-making in a "humorous" scene. LOST is more watchable than you'd expect from Adamson, though schlock fans may be disappointed by the lack of ghastly horrors or John Carradine.

MATT SINGER; New York, NY.

OUTLAW PROPHET (Troma, 1999). If you think that the thing missing from today's schlocky low budget sci-fi action films is a heavy dose of evangelical Christianity, well, frankly, you still won't be satisfied by David Heavener's outrageously silly OUTLAW PROPHET. Heavener plays an alien warrior named Jon 141 (the name is a reference to two biblical passages) who is forced to participate in a galactic reality television show where he fights for the survival of a planet while battling his evil boss McBride, who appears in two forms: a pale-faced goateed guy and a poorly animated floating ball of fart gas. The latest episode of Jon's show takes place on Earth, where he joins forces with a mute orphan while keeping a few steps ahead of McBride's goons, who look like a bunch of alien zombie janitors. Early on, Jon doesn't know anything about religion; he doesn't even understand the meaning of the world "angel" (though, strangely, he does know what "devil" means). By the end of PROPHET, he hasn't just accepted the New Testament, he's reciting passages of scripture as dialogue! This ultra low-budget production is so shoddily produced I doubt it would satisfy even the most devout believers in its audience. Viewers looking for some solid camp laughs, however, will find exactly what they want. Filmed on location in Paris, Tennessee and in several laser tag parks, cheapo highlights include a space alien costume modified from an off-the-rack STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION uniform and a talking "computer" portrayed by a laser light disco ball (Spencer's Gifts must have been a pivotal part of the prop department). At one point, two aliens watch an old monster movie and moan, "Humans have no taste." This is likely Heavener's excuse: he catered his film to the refined tastes of nonexistent aliens! No wonder we don't get it! Check out OUTLAW PROPHET for a film far ahead of its time; a time which will (hopefully) never come to pass.


LLOYD KAUFMAN AND MICHAEL HERZ PRESENT A TROMA TEAM RELEASE
OUTLAW PROPHET
DAVID HEAVENER REBECCA HOLDEN
"IT'S THE MATRIX MEETS SURVIVOR WITH ONE MAN AGAINST THE MONOPOLISTIC MEDIA GONE MAD"
DIRECTED BY DAVID HEAVENER

PSYCHO A GO-GO (Troma, 1965). The expression "If you've seen one, you've seen them all," is better applied to the work of Al Adamson than any other director in movie history. If you've seen one film by this master of cheapo drive-in fare you literally have seen them all, since Adamson was notorious for constantly reusing old footage in new films. PSYCHO A GO-GO was, until this new release from Troma, a lost film, but you could still see large chunks of it incorporated into 1972's BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR, a movie with no less than three concurrent, barely related narratives that nevertheless has a strange no-budget-and-proud appeal. A GO-GO itself was a mutated project; a remix of one of Adamson's earliest failed projects, ECHO OF TERROR. When a potential distributor suggested they add some go-go numbers to broaden the film's limited (or lack of) appeal, Adamson threw in several songs by Tacey Robbins, a singer he was managing at the time, and voila, PSYCHO A GO-GO was born. And, just as quickly, it died, since the film was little more than an exceedingly boring crime story with a couple of terrible, meaningless musical numbers. A bunch of crooks steal some jewels that wind up inside a random child's doll. Will the gang recover the loot before you turn off the DVD? It all depends on your tolerance for bad movie pain. For further timewastery listen to producer Sam Sherman's utterly worthless audio commentary. Despite his best efforts to stretch out and prolong his meager anecdotes — in a style reminiscent of the way ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT airs fifteen minutes of promos for three minute stories on Brad Pitt's abs — his track doesn't even fill A GO-GO's brief running time, allowing you the option of watching the final ten minutes in refreshing silence. Describing the film's brief theatrical release, Sherman says it was "pretty much what we call a disaster." I couldn't have said it better myself. The only thing worth praising in this whole sad affair is Troma's surprisingly appealing DVD box art. It's more interesting than anything you'll find on the disc.

Johnny Cash brings to the screen the story of Jesus of Nazareth... filmed in the Holy Land where it happened.
20th Century-Fox Proudly Presents
Johnny Cash
in
THE GOSPEL ROAD
Robert Elfstrom as Jesus Christ • Larry Lee as John the Baptist • Paul Smith as Simon Peter • Alan Dater as Nicodemus • and June Carter Cash as Mary Magdalene • Produced by June & Johnny Cash • Written by Johnny Cash & Larry Murray • Directed by Robert Elfstrom • Color by Deluxe®
G

THE GOSPEL ROAD (5 Minutes to Live; 1973).

Now that the hype surrounding Mel Gibson's bloodcaked Jesus epic has died down, it's a fine time to resurrect one of the more preposterous savior bios of all time. Filmed in Israel, it's "told and sung" by the Man in Black himself, Johnny Cash, who produced it with his missus June, and personally sunk a half-million bucks into this amateurish holy hokum...er, I mean proud "expression of faith." Meanwhile, in a display of rampant egotism, director Robert Elfstrom (who earlier helmed 1969's JOHNNY CASH! THE MAN, HIS WORLD, HIS MUSIC) cast himself as Jesus, with his young son playing the rugrat Christ. But this blue-eyed, blonde-haired SoCal savior looks more like an LSD-ravaged Beach Boys roadie than "the prince of peace."

Portrayed as a long-haired "radical" (in hopes of luring in the youth audience), this Jesus wanders through a Cliff Notes version of his life, last days and death. He rounds up a posse of disciples, including Paul Smith as a rather Bluto-esque Peter, turns water into wine, traipses about the postcard-pretty countryside, and conducts outdoor sermons to...no one? Yep, it's an empty hillside, and the entire film's lack of any real crowd scenes makes for an oddly minimalist experience.

In a wise move, there's almost no dialogue spoken by the actors, as Cash's heavyhanded narration guides us through Jesus' threadbare journey. Elfstrom often cuts back to Johnny as he squats on a rock or poses on a hilltop, and when he ponders, "I wonder what Mary Magdelene looked like?", we suddenly learn that she was the spitting image of June Carter Cash, spoke with a Southern US twang, and liked to warble John Denver's "Follow Me." The silliest moment has 'The Big J' grimacing on the cross, against the backdrop of a modern city. (Whoa! How totally relevant!) Unfortunately, the film contains fewer unintentional laughs than I'd hoped for, and without Cash's contributions this would've been typical, boring Christian crapola.

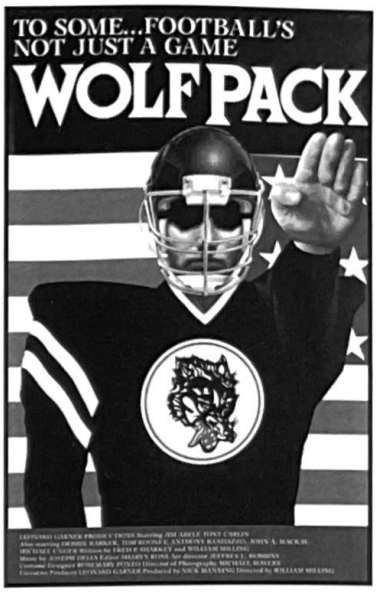
The film's only saving graces are Johnny's sporadic tunes (with additional contributions by Kris Kristofferson and Larry Gatlin), and the soundtrack would've been even better if they'd edited out all of that Jesus bullshit. Throughout it, I kept secretly hoping that Cash would pop one too many pills and suddenly break into a stoned rendition of "Dirty Old Egg-Sucking Dog." But do you want to know my biggest gripe? Throughout the movie there's lots of talk about Jesus' pain, but what about the pain that this listless, simplistic, self-important tripe inflicted on its paying audience? Talk about hypocrisy!

WOLFPACK (Shocking Videos; 1988).

'80s-era high school dramas usually fall into distinct, predictable categories, but this obscure New Jersey-lensed outing is a unique little treat with more on its mind than teen angst or cheap laughs. Director William Milling (best known for schlock like CAGED FURY) co-wrote the script with Fred P. Sharkey, and they use the backdrop of h.s. football for an allegory about the abuse of power, manipulation of the masses and the rise of fascism — all on the budget of your average drive-in sex comedy.

Tony Carlin plays blonde, arrogant Jack Butkowski (nicknamed "Jack Boot"), who's named first-string quarterback of his high school team, the Wolfpack, after the coach's inept son has an unfortunate 'accident' on the field. Meanwhile, Sam (Jim Abele) is the new kid in town, and on his first day at school (1) instantly catches the eye of hottie Myra (Debbie Barker) and (2) is recruited by "Boot" to be the Wolfpack's new tight end. Alas, Myra isn't fond of Sam's pigskin pals, so she uses her feminine wiles to enlighten him to his teammates' bullying, shitheaded behavior. Sam might be a jock, but he also has an open mind (which technically makes this science fiction?) and is eventually turned off by Boot's raging megalomania.

Butkowski is also determined to steal, er...*win* the class presidency, using force and intimidation, but as he explains it, he's just trying to return the school to its past glory. Soon the football team is roaming campus in their ominous black jerseys, cutting down any opposition and holding a scary rally, while Boot's empty speeches differentiate the school's "winners" (him and his followers) from the "losers" (anyone who doesn't mindlessly fall in line, like some lobotomized cheerleader), and twist the notion of "school sprit" into dangerous moral gray areas. Gosh, they almost sound like something Karl Rove would've written.

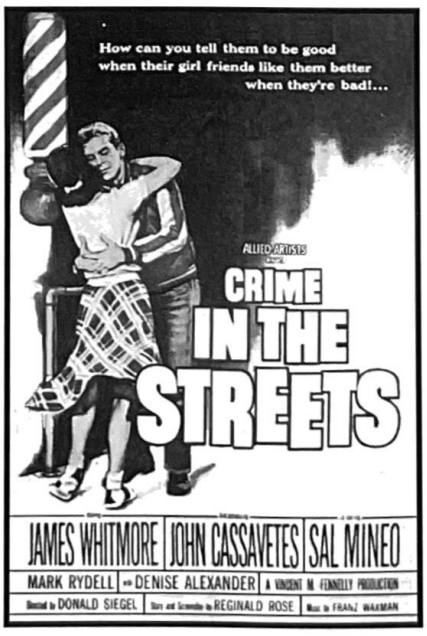


The no-name amateur cast certainly looks authentic, but their level of acting is on par with an AfterSchool Special — which becomes pitifully obvious whenever they're called upon for any deep emotional moments. The one exception is Carlin's genuinely despicable (and vaguely homoerotic) Boots. The score is provided by longtime Abel Ferrara composer Joseph Delia (KING OF NEW YORK), and although Milling's mission isn't subtle, his basic themes are often damned effective and (no surprise) seem even more relevant today then they were during the Reagan Era, when WOLFPACK was made.

CRIME IN THE STREETS (Shocking Videos; 1956).

Adapted for the big screen from an acclaimed ELGIN PLAYHOUSE television production, this Allied Artists entry in the teenage street gang genre boasts a charismatic cast, but is saddled with a hokey script by Reginald Rose (12 ANGRY MEN). It's also a relatively minor work for director Don Siegel, who can adrenalize a film within seconds when given the opportunity (e.g., the gang rumble under the opening credits), but was unable to do much with this heavyhanded story and its corny social relevance.

Years before he became an American cinema auteur, John Cassavetes was 'introduced' as teenaged Frankie Dane, the snide 'n' brooding leader of The Hornets. When an upstairs neighbor snitches to the cops about one of Frankie's zip gun-armed buddies, hotheaded Dane decides to bump off this do-gooder rat. Most of his punk pals (who are about as threatening as GREASE 2 cast members) go yellow at the notion, with the exception of Frankie's two closest comrades: future director Mark Rydell (ON GOLDEN POND) as weaselly Lou and Sal Mineo as Angelo "Baby" Giola, a 15-year-old gang novice who acts tougher than he really is, and is desperately trying to break away from his Italian-stereotype pop.


How can you tell them to be good when their girl friends like them better when they're bad!...
ALLIED ARTISTS
CRIME IN THE STREETS
JAMES WHITMORE | JOHN CASSAVETES | SAL MINEO
MARK RYDELL | and DENISE ALEXANDER | A VINCENT M. FENNELLY PRODUCTION
Directed by DONALD SIEGEL | Story and Screenplay by REGINALD ROSE | Music by FRANZ WAXMAN

James Whitmore is the primary adult on board, playing nosy social worker Ben Wagner, who's constantly butting into Hornets' business. Of course, this pisses off Frankie to no end, since the guy is always ready with a lengthy, tough-love lecture ("I know why you're on fire inside, and I'm gonna lay you bare, so brace yourself."). Meanwhile, Frankie is such a lazy, no-good scumbag that he makes his mother slave away as a waitress to pay their rent, and even pulls a switchblade on his little brother (who's either mildly retarded or just a lousy actor).

26-year-old Cassavetes (who also played the role in the TV-version) doesn't make the most convincing teenager, but nevertheless, his electrifying performance holds together this hamhanded tale. Frankie is a poster child for anger management, and if anyone accidentally touches him, be prepared for a Method Sociopath explosion. The production's artificial backlot street scenes blunt the story, but at least the filmmakers get their slum living conditions right, with entire families packed into HONEYMOONERS-furnished studio apartments, (which Frankie lovingly refers to as a "dirty, filthy, stinkin' hole"). Unfortunately, it's not enough to redeem this middling melodrama, which end with a finale of unadulterated Hollywood hogwash, without a cheap thrill or genuine emotion in sight.

JOE WAWRZYNIAK; Metuchen, NJ.

MOVING VIOLATION (1976). MACON COUNTY LINE's substantial drive-in success single-handedly beget the much beloved and always-guaranteed-to-please "don't go down to Dixie" Southern-fried inhospitality genre. Wicked bellicose hillbillies grossly mistreated hapless Northerners in such on-target features as Jack Starrett's typically robust A SMALL TOWN IN TEXAS, the astonishingly bleak JACKSON COUNTY JAIL, and the savagely seamy and revolting A NIGHTMARE IN BADHAM COUNTY. Well, here's another particularly lively addition to the cycle. Scruffy, mischievous smart-ass Detroit drifter Eddie (rangily personable beanpole Stephen McHattie) and his sweet, plucky gal pal Cam (a winning performance by the ever pert and appealing Kay Lenz) witness a murder committed by a growly, profane, corrupt, vicious, irritable, just flat-out no-account and reprehensible cracker sheriff (a stand-out scurvy portrayal by Lonny Chapman). The couple naturally go on the lam; Chapman and his hilariously inept deputies give hot pursuit. While David R. Osterhout's compact script offers nothing new and the story never springs any novel twists or genuine surprises, the film nonetheless sizes up as a pretty solid and satisfying affair. In other words, the trite narrative gets redeemed by the briskness and vibrancy of the commendably spirited and unpretentious execution. Directed with galvanizing hopped-up gusto by Charles S. Dubin, further energized by Donald Peake's exuberantly shit-kickin', banjo-pluckin', pile-drivin' country swing score and Charles Correll's splendidly agile, mobile, crisply handsome and polished cinematography, jam-packed with more auto-wreckin', metal-mashin', cars smackin' into each other and flipping over in glorious slow-motion vehicular carnage than you can shake a rusty tire iron at, and topped off with nice acting by the immensely likable leads, plus nifty cameos by Eddie Albert as a friendly, sympathetic lawyer, Will Geer as a crusty, snappish, nasty old fuck oil baron, and the ubiquitous Dick Miller as one of Chapman's pernicious flunkies, MOVING VIOLATION tears ass ahead with such speedy breakneck velocity that it ultimately comes through as a giddy slice of dynamically enthusiastic demolition derby cinema.

STEPHEN McHATTIE
KAY LENZ
EDDIE ALBERT
LONNY CHAPMAN
WILL GEER
IF YOU STEAL IT, ROLL IT AND WRECK IT— YOU'RE A MOVING VIOLATION
IT'S A FENDER BENDING, BODY SMASHING DEMOLITION CHASE THAT WILL RIP OFF YOUR ROOF!
Produced by JULIE CORMAN · Executive Producer ROGER CORMAN
Screenplay by DAVID R. OSTERHOUT and WILLIAM NORTON
Directed by CHARLES S. DUBIN
Color by Deluxe
Story by DAVID R. OSTERHOUT
PG

HOTWIRE (1980). Strother Martin, that late, great grizzled ol' fuddy dud character actor supreme, has his only non-horror pic leading role in this giddy, rambunctious, footloose and fancy free downhome drive-in comedy about the colorfully shady and unscrupulous subculture of automobile repossession. It's a sort of Southern-fried REPO MAN set in the Texas sticks. Strother delivers a splendidly rascally performance as cagey, boozy, lecherous venerable car jacker George "the Weasel" Thorney ("rhymes with horny"), who teaches eager, cocksure young buck car thief Billy Ed Wallace (John Terry, who also portrayed the phenomenally drippy and underwhelming bargain basement Robin Hood protagonist in the lovably chintzy sword and sorcery clinker HAWK THE SLAYER, around the same time he appeared in this little darling) the ropes. Billy Ed gets neck deep in trouble when he falls head over ass in love with a sweet young gal (the fetching Jean Sanders) who belongs to mean, grasping local pimp Bodine (leering chrome dome Lawrence Dopkin), trouble that's compounded when Billy and the Weasel steal Bodine's beloved Rolls Royce. A stock plot for sure, but the breezy tone, Frank Q. Dobbs' brisk direction, a snappy pace, the jubilant country and western score, peppery dialogue ("I stopped buying cars when they stopped making rear ends that pretty"), a neat cameo by Jim Siedow (the Cook in THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE) as a cantankerous, shotgun-toting yokel, some tasty regional flavoring, and lively turns by George Kennedy in a dual role as a prissy, effeminate car dealer *and* his brutish, corrupt police chief brother keep HOTWIRE darting along at a nice, steady clip. Strother Martin's hearty, ebullient acting in particular is an absolute hoot — and so's the movie in general.

ANTONIO GRAGNANIELLO; Naples, Italy; arrabal70@hotmail.com.

ORG (1978). Best known for realistic popular movies like TIRE DIE (1960), LOS INUNDADOS (1961) and LA PAMPA GRINGA (1963), this experimental film is director Fernando Birri's most cosmic, delirious and "lumpen" work, inspired by an old Indian legend, "The Washerwoman's Dilemma." So what does ORG mean? Orgy, Organization, Orgasm, "Orgullo"(Pride), Organic, Organism...? It's not really clear. In a confusing, kaleidoscopic collage of over 56,000 cuts and 700 sound files — along with fragments of light, music and words, as well as assemblies of famous personalities from Allende to Leonardo Da Vinci — Birri develops the story of the black Grrr (Iàac Tweg Obn) and the white Zohomm (a distraught Terence Hill), both in love with the pretty Shuick (Lidja Juracik), who is then won by the latter. But Zohomm is suspicious that her heart beats for the other, a fact confirmed by the Cybernetic Sybil, so, eaten up by jealousy, he cuts off his own head. When Grrr finds his friend dead, he imitates him, while Shuick is stopped by the Sybil just as she's prepared to take a leap off a climb, with the promise to give the two men's lives back. But after reattaching their heads, Shuick realizes that she has inverted them, so the doubts about her choice only increase. The only person able to show them the right way is Toute-La-Memoire-Du-Monde (All-The-Memory-Of-The-World), an old sage living hibernated on an asteroid, who eventually opts for Zohomm's head, while Grrr is exiled into space. Years go by and though Shuick has a baby, she can't forget Grrr, so she embarks on an intergalactic voyage to reach him. But Zohomm, whose body is starting to turn white, secretly trails her and finds the two making love. Eventually the three friends come to the conclusion that they can never be happy contemporaneously, and so decide to destroy themselves. But maybe there will be someone who will be allowed to live a more peaceful life: the child, whom was left with the three's best qualities: strength, beauty and intelligence. Shot during Birri's exile in Italy, it was celebrated at 1979 Venice Film Festival as a sensational event. Unfortunately, the film was not shown again because its leading actor — who had acquired the copyrights — held the film locked, probably fearing that his eccentric role could be harmful to his image. It's now time to unearth this subversive and disturbing poetic-political utopia.

PRATA PALOMARES (1972). This extraordinary (and only) Brazilian feature from director André Faria can be considered Cinema Novo's swan song, although several of its elements can also be ascribed to the 'Udigrudi' (underground) or Cinema Marginal movements. It's a hallucinatory and violent nightmare, strongly pervaded with left-wing radical ideologies. Two wounded guerrillas, running from an unknown military skirmish wrecks on the strange island of Porto Seguro, where they hide in an abandoned church. From behind the altar, they first peep at a freakish young man who drinks the Bleeding Virgin's blood from some shrines and clears away the church of human body parts; and then at a (devout) crazy aristocratic American family — complete with a suite of policemen — who tyrannize the place and change the church into a chamber for torture and executions. There also appears an incarnation of the Bleeding Virgin, a mysterious woman accompanied by a group of children, who makes love to both men and joins in the fight. As if enlightened, one of the guerrillas lays down his arms and, disguising himself as a priest, ventures outside. There he experiences the reality of the revolutionaries, living in poverty and addicted to all kind of perversions, and of the repressive stars-'n'-stripes aristocracy, while drawing followers with his raving sermons and speeches from both sides. But his conversion also causes continuous arguments with his companion. One day the police catch the leader of the revolutionaries, take him into the church and after brutally torturing him, they cut off his head in front of the clapping, white-dressed members of the rich family, including a little girl, who takes the macabre trophy with them. However the woman doesn't give up and tries to stir up revolt during a bloody black magic ritual, but the police find her too and cut off her tongue and hands in gory detail. Despite being mute and maimed, she continues a wordless revolution, while fantasizing about revenge. As for the pseudo priest, by now he's gone totally mad and is nearly co-opted once the Americans quit, until he and his followers come to the expected end. Behind its apparently realistic backdrop hides a totally delirious work, and even the graphic violence assumes an absurd tone that makes it tolerable. This subversive, expressionistic masterpiece was withdrawn two consecutive years from the Cannes Film Festival by the Brazilian government and then sank into oblivion.

VIN CONSERVA; Garden City, NY.

CHANGES (1969). CHANGES inhabits a celluloid world unto itself. Strong words, but true. EASY RIDER, VANISHING POINT and BLOW UP are just a few of the films that featured anti-heroes searching for some sort of inner truth during the flower power era. These films are acknowledged classics, but why CHANGES isn't mentioned in the same breath is more than a mystery — it's a crime...The plot is pure "counterculture" pulp. Kent (played by Kent Lane) is a university student who feels like an outsider. He quits school and tells his parents that he needs to find himself. After his ex-girlfriend apparently commits suicide, guilt-ridden Kent jumps in his sports car to (you guessed it!) find America. This sounds like every other "love child" movie ever made, but the way this fable is told is most uncommon indeed. The film plays out almost like a visual poem. The viewer might think that the stop/start, narration/montage sequences will give way to a more traditional linear cinema experience, but it doesn't. At least not for the first two-thirds of the movie. It's at that point Kent meets Julie (gorgeous Michele Carey) who is by definition a "free spirit." Up until this encounter all of Kent's experiences have been brief but eye opening, with Julie however, Kent finds himself settling down and even taking a job at a carnival. The symbolism of his job — running the ferris wheel — is sublime, but will Kent be true to himself and move on, or will he settle down with now-"domesticated" Julie? Richard Moore's (WILD IN THE STREETS) cinematography is nothing short of brilliant, with aerial shots of the California coast drenched in morning dew that border on the surreal. Then there is the music. The wonderful pastoral soundtrack is made up of songs mostly performed by Tim Buckley. These visual/audio passages have a melancholy, dreamlike quality that is truly haunting. Director Hall Bartlett has crafted one of the most unique looking and sounding films of the decade, and considering the decade in question, that's saying something. Kent Lane brings a warm/confused aura to the role, and after reteaming with Bartlett on 1971's THE SANDPIT GENERALS, he all but disappeared. It's a shame, since the man displayed an abundance of acting talent. Co-star Michele Carey (THE SWEET RIDE) was the quintessential '60s chick. Sexy, sweet and full of questions, she did tons of genre work on episodic television throughout the next decade. Also, don't blink or you'll miss Teri Garr. If the picture has a fault, it is the ending; the payoff doesn't pack enough punch, and the conclusion would have had more impact if the tempo had shifted gears for the final scene. That said, this is a must see for those who harken back to a time when walks through the park were met with smiling children, the scent of incense and blissful hope.

BUSTING OUT IS NOT SELLING OUT
from the drag strips...
to the hippie haunts...
to the love ins...
to the lash outs...
"ONE OF THE MOST IMAGINATIVE, HAUNTING AND ARTISTIC MOVIES YET MADE OF CONTEMPORARY YOUTH."
A Hall Bartlett Film
a wild generation is out to make
"CHANGES"
Starring Kent Lane · Michele Carey · Jack Albertson
Songs by Tim Buckley Written by Bill E. Kelly and Hall Bartlett
Produced and Directed by Hall Bartlett · Color · Panavision
"Both Sides Now" Joni Mitchell
Hear "Changes" sung by Kim Weston

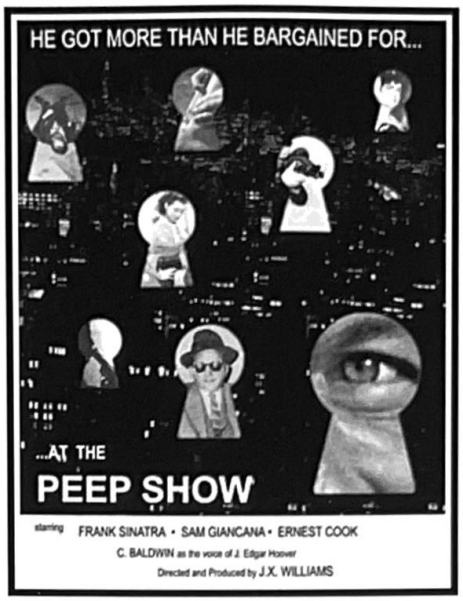
ACT OF VENGEANCE [a.k.a. Rape Squad] (1974). This is a film that could only have been made in the 1970's. If there is any truth to the old saying that art imitates life (or is it the other way around?), then it was apparent that this country had enough of crime in the streets, and from the late-'60s through the early-'80s there were scores of pics devoted to the "vengeance is mine" creed. ACT OF VENGEANCE put a unique spin on the sub-genre by placing a female in the driver's seat. Jo Ann Harris plays Linda, who operates her lunch truck by herself. One night, she is viciously attacked by a man wearing an orange jumpsuit and a hockey mask. He beats Linda and forces her to sing "Jingle Bells" during the attack, and afterwards, makes her say, "Thank you, Mr. Rapist." It's a hard scene to watch, but this agony is just the beginning. Linda is forced to endure a medical exam given by a smug doctor, is questioned by police as if she were the criminal, and even boyfriend Tom (Steve Kanaly from TV's DALLAS) doubts her truthfulness. Along with four other victims of the "Jingle Bells" rapist, Linda forms a "Rape Squad." They become organized, train in the martial arts and even set traps. One such occurrence involves a club owner (Tony Young) who got off scott free from a rape charge. He takes the Squad's bait and soon Tony is tied down on his bed while his tacky apartment is demolished and his privates are dyed blue! But soon the ladies' real target makes his presence known. You see, not only did he attack these women, but he's kept a twisted diary of their activities — beginning his tape recorded rants by saying "diary of a champ." Our "champ" soon elevates himself from rape to murder, and it all leads to a violent confrontation at an abandoned zoo. Since this is an AIP release, exploitation is mixed in with the feminist slant, and director Bob Kelljan (COUNT YORGA, VAMPIRE) does a fine job shifting gears from action to exposition to '70s-style sleaze, while the screenplay was in fact co-written by a woman — Betty Conklin worked on THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS, and H.R. Christian's credits include BLACK MAMA, WHITE MAMA. Overall the performances range from adequate to excellent. Harris is outstanding in a difficult role (and a cult following is slowly building for this underappreciated actress), while Peter Brown is compelling as the madman (despite the fact that his face is never completely shown until the final reel). [Note: Brown played an almost identical role on an episode of VEGA$ in 1978.] One subtle but chilling character shading has "Jingle Bells" feeling remorse for the accidental murder of one of his victims, so he plans another rape to take his mind off things! This is a mean but important entry in the AIP archives.

The Story of The Rape Squad!
Linda
Teresa
Karen
Nancy
Angie
They all had one thing in common... They had been violated in the same savage way.
...NOW THEY'RE OUT TO GET EVEN!
Act of VENGEANCE
LET THE REVENGE FIT THE CRIME!
COLOR by MOVIELAB
JO ANN HARRIS · PETER BROWN · JENNIFER LEE · LISA MOORE · CONNIE STRICKLAND
PATRICIA ESTRIN · LADA EDMUND JR. & TONY YOUNG
AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURE
Written by BETTY CONKLIN & H.R. CHRISTIAN · Produced by BUZZ FEITSHANS · Directed by ROBERT KELLJICHAN

SCREAM PRETTY PEGGY (1973). For a period of about 15 years — late-'60s to early-'80s — it seemed like every other telefilm being made was a fright fest, and these small-screen entries are still fondly remembered. Made at the height of the '70s "Movie of the Week" craze, SCREAM PRETTY PEGGY is both creepy and derivative. University student Peggy (Sian Barbara Allen, who played John Boy's girlfriend on THE WALTONS) answers a want ad for a housekeeper, even though the pay is unreasonably low. When she arrives at the given address her employer introduces himself as Jeffrey (THAT GIRLS' Ted Bessell) Elliot, a famous sculptor. Said artist lives in a large secluded manor with his alcoholic mother, played to the hilt by Bette Davis, who was well into her 'gothic' phase by the time SPP was made. It turns out that Peggy wanted the job because she has a serious interest in Jeffrey's work, and is actually a young sculptor who wants to learn from the master. What she doesn't know is that a girl was once stabbed to death while fleeing the old house. Not long after our heroine moves in, she encounters strange problems: a worried gentleman confronts her about his missing daughter, Jeffrey has a mentally ill sister named Jennifer, and on top of all this, Mrs. Elliott doesn't want any girls around her son! The detective in Peggy begins to snoop around, which could be a fatal mistake on her part, and by the end of the last reel she does indeed scream...This is not one of scripter Jimmy Sangster's best efforts. The man is a living legend, however this picture is more of a tribute than an original work, and any psycho/slasher film fan will spot the HOUSE OF WAX, PSYCHO and even Sangster's own PARANOIAC reference points a mile away. Another problem lies in the fact that there are just not enough characters, or in this case, suspects (and I'm sure quite a few readers have figured out who the mad fiend is just from this review). Gordon Hessler does a commendable job, but isn't given a strong enough blueprint to work with. The murders (and there aren't enough of them) are quite creepy though. Sian Barbara Allen possesses an appealing presence, and her scariest scenes don't involve sharp kitchen knives or skulking lunatics — but instead a bicycle! It's quite apparent that Allen was introduced to this two-wheeled terror just moments before "Action!" was called, and she appears both ill at ease and terrified while peddling along. Although not the strongest effort the genre has to offer, it's still a fun ride for fans who remember breaking out the Jiffy Pop and beanbags for a Saturday Night shock-a-rama, while never leaving the comfort of home.

PEEP SHOW (Other Cinema; 1965).

According to its press release, PEEP SHOW is a 40-year-old lost film by an allusive, paranoid underground filmmaker named "J.X. Williams." But this 46-minute romp is so strange and savvy that you begin to suspect something's fishy — as if this is all a big put on. But whether "J.X. Williams" is an authentic, ahead-of-his-time genius or a just clever little hoax, doesn't diminish the film's imaginative story and style. It's a mindwarped mini-masterpiece in the Craig Baldwin tradition, as well as a conspiracy theorist's wet dream.


HE GOT MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR...
...AT THE
PEEP SHOW
starring FRANK SINATRA • SAM GIANCANA • ERNEST COOK
C. BALDWIN as the voice of J. Edgar Hoover
Directed and Produced by J.X. WILLIAMS

Set in 1961 Chicago, a mysterious passenger slides into a taxi cab's backseat and offers to tell the driver one hell of a story. He spills the beans about the Windy City syndicate's true ties to Hollywood and Washington D.C., amidst tales of torture, whores, dealing heroin ("a big, hip new craze") to celebrity clientele, as well as Sam Giancona's cache of dirty movies used for blackmail purposes (with titles such as "Rock Hudson's Pajama Party" and "Mansfield Miscegenation Madness"). When Frank Sinatra becomes a junkie, it leads directly to John F. Kennedy, the Cuba revolution, Castro assassination attempts, Bobby Kennedy (referred to as "Senator Fuckwad"), and an epilogue that ties it all together into one terrifically cynical package.

Meanwhile, the b&w visuals are a mish mash of found footage containing cocktail lounges, city streets, TV-commercials, numerous clips from Sinatra's heroin classic THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM (to illustrate Ol' Blue Eyes' dope addiction), plus secret FBI recordings. Cleverly edited for maximum sly laughs, PEEP SHOW is an amusing, extremely imaginative peek into the backrooms of the people who *really* run America.

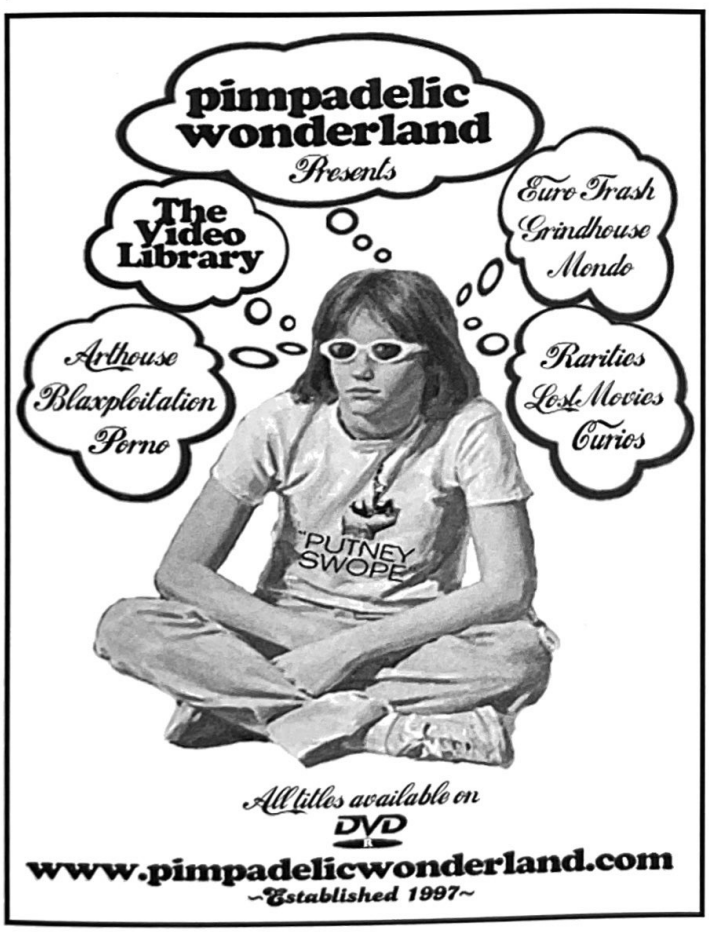
BIG COMMOTION (5 Minutes to Live; 1968).

The Spiders were one of Japan's most famous "Group Sound" bands and their popularity skyrocketed following the Beatles' '66 visit to their country. The Spiders eventually toured Europe, made a pit stop in Hawaii, became the first Japanese band signed to the Philips label, and in addition to their many albums, starred in a handful of feature films. This colorful, braindead musical-comedy is a good indication of their middling on-screen charisma, with a story that's even more confusing than originally intended due to its lack of English subtitles.

Following some lava lamp opening credits, The Spiders arrive in Tokyo and promptly embark on a groovy, episodic adventure. Packed into their Ford station wagon, a couple of the bandmates fall for a cute gal they spot from afar, but an auto accident lands them in the hospital with unorthodox treatments for their neck injuries. Obsessively-lovesick lead singer Masaaki Sakai (the band's resident doofus, who they often refer to as "Baka"=Idiot) begins to suffer from cross-eyed hallucinations. This leads to surgical silliness, wartime hijinx, an explosive soccer ball, and a spaghetti western showdown, while Masaaki's weirdest blackout involves an Arctic musical moment complete with parkas, igloos and a stuffed polar bear. Alas, it never gets weird enough — and just when a wild psychedelic sequence kicks in, the filmmakers quickly return to cheap antics.

Bouncing randomly from one episode to another, the plot has all of the complexity of a lesser MONKEES episode. But these Spiders dress more like squares, with ties and natty three-piece-suits that make 'em seem as hip as a Lawrence Welk combo. Meanwhile, Masaaki's romantic obsession leads to further chaos. He's 30% Ringo, 70% Urkel, and less lovable than certifiable. He destroys a restaurant, is recruited by annoying street performers (leading to a groan-inducing Chaplin homage), is chased throughout the city by his bandmates, and creates one hell of a big commotion.

Masaaki (who went onto TV fame in Japan for his '70s series MONKEY MAGIC) is painful at times, but the worst offense is that The Spiders' brief concert interludes don't give us a chance to listen to even one complete tune, since the filmmakers are more focused on their weak 'n' wacky comedy. What music we do get is far too wimpy for my tastes. It's a strange hodgepodge, without enough cool moments to approach cult status or warrant 86 minutes of your time, unless you're a diehard fanatic for this sort of Asian silliness.



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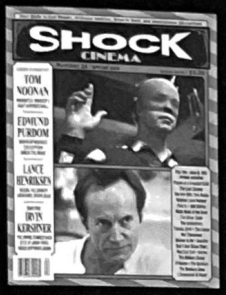

SC24. Spring 2004. $5. Interviews with **Edmund Purdom**, **Tom Noonan**, **Lance Henriksen**, **Irvin Kershner**. Reviews include *The Lineup*, *Hot Tomorrows*, *Puzzle of a Downfall Child*, *Pure S.*, *The Last Chapter*, *The Godmothers*, *Ong-Bak*, *Nothing Lasts Forever*, *Believe in Me*, et cetera.

SC23. Fall/Winter 2003. $5. Q&A's with **Fred Ward**, **David Carradine**, **Bill McKinney**, **Igo Kantor**, **Milton Moritz**. Reviews include *Dirty O'Neil*, *Son of Hitler*, *International Guerrillas*, *Model Shop*, *Godspeed You! Black Emperor*, *The Sea That Thinks*, *The Laughing Man*, etc.

SC22. Spring/Summer 2003. $5. Interviews with **Bradford Dillman, Nick Mancuso**, cinematographer **Michael Chapman,** and **M. Emmet Walsh**. Reviews include *Jigsaw*, *Pepe*, *My Best Friend's Birthday*, *The Christian Licorice Store*, *The Hippie Temptation*, *The Brute*, *Way Out*, etc.

SC 21. Fall/Winter 2002. $5. Q&A's with **Malcolm McDowell**, **Kurtwood Smith**, director **Oscar Williams**, cinematographer **Vilmos Zsigmond**. Film reviews include *Winter Soldier*, *Hochelaga*, *Leo the Last*, *Melody Nelson*, *Stoned*, *Jim the World's Greatest*, *I Cannibali*, *Gojoe*, *Look in Any Window*.

SC 20. Spr./Summer 2002. $5. Q&A's w/ **Keith David**, **Michael Moriarty**, **Joe Turkel**, **W.D. Richter**, **Lee Frost**. Reviews include *Captain Milkshake*, *Ice*, *The Diadem & Mini-Killers*, *Deadhead Miles*, *Duffy*.

SC 19. Fall/Winter 2001. $5. Q&A's with **James Remar**, **Jared Martin**, **Don Gordon**, **Lorenzo Semple, Jr.** Plus *Stardust*, *Gonks Go Beat*, *Demon Lover Diary*, *I Saw Jesus Die*, *Inchon*, *Deafula*.

SC 18. Spring/Summer 2001. $5. Interviews with **Victor Argo**, **Jesse Vint**, **Kinji Fukasaku**. Reviews include *The Owl Service*, *Felidae*, *Mondo Candido*, *Bleeder*, *A Cold Wind in August*, *Kenny & Company*.

SC 17. Fall/Winter 2000. $5. Q&A's with **Paul Morrissey**, **Eddie Deezen**, **Philip D'Antoni**, **Carol Speed**. Reviews include *The She-Rat*, *Strangers in the City*, *Synanon*, *Pearls Before Swine*, *Perfect Friday*.

SC 16. Spring/Summer 2000. $5. Interviews with **Julius W. Harris**, **Marilyn Joi**, **Michael Campus**, **Sid Haig**. Reviews include *Play It As It Lays*, *Zebra Killer*, *Ghostwatch*, *Of Freaks and Men*, *Mindbender*.

SC 15. Fall/Win. 1999. $5. Q&A's w/ **Fred Williamson** and **Hugh Keays-Byrne**. Plus *Je T'Aime Je T'Aime*, *The Story of Mankind*, *Brother Theodore Speaks*, *Street of Dreams*, *The People Next Door*.

SC 14. Spring/Summer 1999. $5. Q&A's with **Paul Koslo**, **A.C. Stephen** and **Haji**. Plus *Go Ask Alice*, *Coming Apart*, *Forty Deuce*, Mark IV Rapture movies, *Angel's Flight*, *Can Dialectics Break Bricks?*

SC 13. Fall/Winter 1998. $5. Interviews with **Don Stroud** and **Russ Meyer**. Plus *Punishment Park*, *Who Are You Polly Maggoo?*, *Pound*, *Dirty Weekend*, *The Slams*, *Bigfoot and Wildboy*, *Jag Mandir.*

SC 12. Spring/Summer 1998. $5. Interview with **William Smith**. Plus *Werewolf of Woodstock*, *The Gong Show Movie*, *Evil Roy Slade*, *Alabama's Ghost*, *Cover Me Babe*, *Strawberries Need Rain*,*Benny's Video*.

SC 11. Fall/Winter 1997. $5. Reviews include *Trans-Europ-Express*, *The American Dreamer*, *Charlotte*, *The Big Cube*, *Chubasco*, *They Call Her One-Eye*, *Don't Worry We'll Think of a Title*, *Vigilante Force*.

SC 10. Spring/Summer 1997. $5. Reviews include *The Phynx*, *Kid Blue*, *Bike Boy*, *Burst City*, *A Man Called Dagger*, *Pets*, *The Power*, *The Pusher*, *The Cool Ones*, *Mad Foxes*, *The Monitors*.

SC 8. Spring/Summer 1996. $5. Reviews include *Let My Puppets Come*, *Fast Company*, *God's Angry Man*, *Pink Narcissus*, *The Candy Snatchers*, *Who Killed Teddy Bear?*, *My Hustler*, *Jabberwalk*.

SC 7. 1995. $4. Reviews include *The Touchables*, *Beyond Love and Evil*, *The Saragossa Manuscript*, *Privilege*, *Flaming Creatures*, *Cool Breeze*, *Paganini*, *Son of Dracula*, *Karamoja!*, *No Blade of Grass*.

SC 6. 1994. $4. Reviews include *Skidoo*, *Farewell Uncle Tom*, *The World's Greatest Sinner*, *The Chelsea Girls*, *Chafed Elbows*, *Wedding Trough*, *Shelf Life*, *Vapors*, *Young Playthings*, *Monaco Forever*.

Make checks payable to Steven Puchalski, or use Paypal (www.paypal.com) to: ShockCin@aol.com

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The World Needs More People Like
ROSANNE KATON-WALDEN

By CHRIS POGGIALI

The tip of the iceberg is this: Rosanne Katon was a *Playboy* Playmate (Miss September 1978) and a charismatic, likable actress in a string of low-budget drive-in movies: THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS (1974), CHESTY ANDERSON, US NAVY (1975), EBONY, IVORY & JADE (1976), THE MUTHERS (1976), COACH (1978), and LUNCH WAGON (1980). Forget about the *Playboy* pictorial — those pictures do her no justice. Instead, find her layout in the September 1976 issue of *Sepia* magazine; you'll discover one of the most breathtaking beauties of the 1970's. And I like THE MUTHERS as much as the next guy — OK, maybe a good deal *more* than the next guy — but they were working without a completed script on that one, and the finished film would've been a heck of a lot better if Katon had been hired to write a draft; for a great example of her sharp, engaging writing style — and a fascinating look into her childhood — check your local library or bookstore for her biographical essay "Whispered Histories" in Meri Nana-Ama Danquah's *Becoming American: Personal Essays by First Generation American Women*.

Katon's first break came at age 10, as one of the first black girls to appear in a nationally televised commercial (for Metropolitan Life Insurance). More commercials followed, and by 13 she was attending the High School of the Performing Arts in New York City. After graduation and a year in Europe, she landed a lead role in the touring stage production of GODSPELL and got to perform her rousing rendition of "Turn Back, O Man" from the show in the half-hour TV special GODSPELL GOES TO PLIMOTH PLANTATION FOR THANKSGIVING (1973), produced by WGBH in Boston. She moved to Los Angeles soon afterward and grabbed a small walk-on in the Sidney Poitier-Bill Cosby comedy LET'S DO IT AGAIN (as the woman in the bath towel Cos memorably leers at through a hotel window). Mostly B-movies followed, but Katon — who is of mixed African, Arabic and Scottish descent, by way of Jamaica — managed to skirt the popular and controversial "blaxploitation" flicks of the period.

On TV, she had guest spots on GOOD TIMES, SANFORD AND SON, WHAT'S HAPPENING!!, STARSKY AND HUTCH, CHiPs, DALLAS, and DIVORCE COURT, and recurring roles on FULL HOUSE, ST. ELSEWHERE, THE WHITE SHADOW, and the live-action Saturday morning sci-fi kid's show JASON OF STAR COMMAND. There were also two failed attempts to spin off successful sitcoms: GRADY, a short-lived showcase for SANFORD AND SON regular Whitman Mayo, cast Katon as the granddaughter of the titular character (with Joe Morton as her father, Grady's son-in-law). The show lasted 12 weeks. The "Brian and Sylvia" installment of THE FACTS OF LIFE introduced Sylvia Parker (Katon) and her husband Brian (future MacGYVER star Richard Dean Anderson), the aunt and uncle of series regular Kim Fields' character Tootie, with the intention of giving them their own show. Tentatively titled THE PARKERS, it would've been the first American prime time sitcom about an interracial married couple. It never happened.

Katon was Miss Golden Globe in 1981 and a presenter at THE FIRST ANNUAL ZANY AWARDS. She appeared on the covers of a half dozen issues of *Players* magazine and in print ads for Olympia Beer. The PINK LADY AND JEFF variety show and THE PLAYBOY ROLLER DISCO AND PAJAMA PARTY television special were blessed with her presence as well. On the big screen, she was in MOTEL HELL (1980), BODY AND SOUL (1981), ZAPPED! (1982), and BACHELOR PARTY (1984), but was apparently cut from the skit comedy PRIME TIME (1977) sometime after the closing credits were completed. On stage, she played Jo-Jo "The Bounce" Washington (a.k.a. Prisoner 429870) in Tom Eyen's WOMEN BEHIND BARS, a spoof of the 1950 film CAGED, at the Cast at the Circle Theatre in Los Angeles in 1983. The well-publicized production also starred Adrienne Barbeau, Deborah Harmon, and — for a fleeting moment — Melanie Griffith (quickly replaced by Jennifer Holmes).

Oh, did I mention that she also did stand-up comedy in the late 1980's?

"I have a very hard time looking at any form of entertainment as something for a role model," Katon told *BadAzz MoFo* magazine a few years ago. "The real role models are parents. The real role models are teachers. Now *that's* a role model!"

She hasn't had a professional acting job in nearly 15 years — and she doesn't seem to miss the business at all. Since her marriage in 1984 to Richard Walden, president and CEO of the international relief organization Operation USA, Katon has become a parent as well as a teacher of sorts, and — as you will soon find out — is heavily involved with many foreign and domestic humanitarian aid programs sponsored by Operation USA. After you're finished reading this interview, visit **www.opusa.org** to get a better idea of how Rosanne, Richard and Op USA's staff and volunteers are helping to make the world a better place for everyone.

Now *that's* a role model!

SHOCK CINEMA: I really enjoyed your essay "Whispered Histories." I hope you're working on your autobiography now.

Rosanne Katon-Walden: I was interviewed for a PBS special called THEY CAME TO AMERICA based on that essay, and I've been doing some other writing, but not specifically an autobiography. I write short stories, screenplays, essays — that kind of thing. I do a lot of traveling with my husband for Operation USA and that's where my essay writing began. I've done political op-ed pieces, but I haven't gotten around to the current war in Iraq yet — mostly issues relating to education and health care.

SC: The last time we spoke, you mentioned an upcoming production of THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES...

Katon-Walden: Yes! That was last week. Our P.T.A. did it. (laughs) I haven't done any acting in almost 15 years — maybe a couple of brief things that friends have asked me to do — and then someone asked me to do THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES for charity. It was fantastic! You haven't heard anything until you've heard a school principal say, *"What does your vagina smell like?"* (laughs) And she got a huge laugh because she's so principal-like! It was great that all the mothers pulled together to do that.

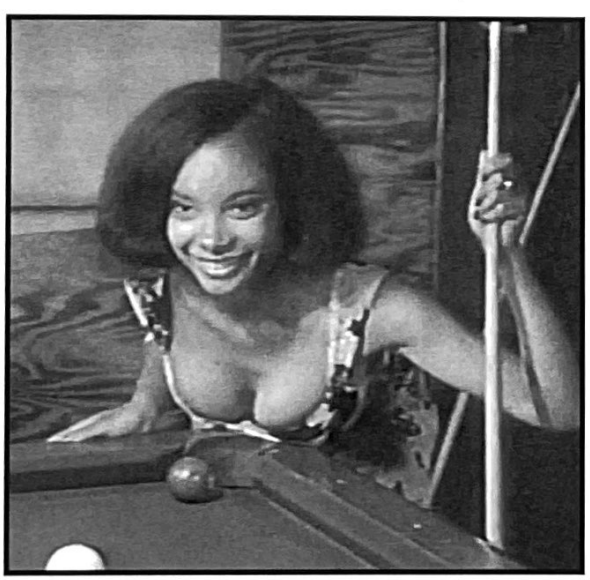
SC: I discovered the GODSPELL GOES TO PLIMOTH PLANTATION FOR THANKSGIVING television special a few months ago and was pleasantly surprised.

Katon-Walden: I did GODSPELL on stage for almost 18 months and that was wonderful. It was sort of my "growing up," because we were on tour. We actually filmed the special on the Plimoth Plantation. I'm good friends with Roland Joffé, who's on the Op USA advisory board. When he was preparing to direct THE SCARLET LETTER, he didn't know about Plimoth Plantation, so I told him about it and he ended up filming some of THE SCARLET LETTER there. So that was my contribution to that movie.

SC: THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS was your first movie in L.A.?
Katon-Walden: Yes, that was right after I got here. I was also doing television at the time — all those Norman Lear shows. There were very few parts for black women back then. I'd get maybe four interviews a year, and I would have to get at least two of those jobs in order to keep calling myself an actress, as opposed to someone who does acting as a hobby. I was of that era when people could say out loud, *"If you weren't black, we'd love to give you the part."* I heard that constantly. Now, if someone said that, there'd be a huge brouhaha, but back then people would come right out and say that to your face. I mean, I couldn't even get an agent half the time. They'd say, *"We have Cicely Tyson. She's our black woman."* (laughs) It's a different world now.

SC: Do you still keep in touch with a lot of the B-movie people you worked with?
Katon-Walden: I'm still very good friends with Colleen Camp. I don't see Jack Hill as often as I used to, but I still see John Prizer, who lives in Washington D.C. now. He almost became the head of the National Endowment for the Arts. The guy who wrote — oh, you're gonna love this — the guy who wrote SWITCHBLADE SISTERS is now the editor of this really conservative religious newspaper out in Denver! (laughs) My husband and I went to the opening of SWITCHBLADE SISTERS a few years ago and saw Marlene Clark there, and Joanne Nail, who looked exactly the same as she did in the movie! Basically, I see a lot of whoever is around here. A lot of people have died. I know a lot of girls who did these movies who were murdered. I think the toll of young ladies who come to Hollywood is a lot higher than one realizes.

Katon in THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS



Rosanne in CHESTY ANDERSON, U.S. NAVY

SC: Rainbeaux Smith passed away a couple of years ago.
Katon-Walden: I know! She was absolutely gorgeous. I ran into her son years later, and at that point she was very much addicted to drugs, he told me. It was very sad. His father, who had seemed very irresponsible early on when Rainbeaux was pregnant, really stepped up to the plate and brought the son up beautifully. It's so sad about Rainbeaux, though, because she was such a sweetheart. The whole drug thing — you usually think of teenagers falling into that, but she fell into it pretty late on. I don't think she got into the hard drugs until she was in her 30's. The whole thing is really horrible.

SC: You did two movies in the Philippines for Cirio H. Santiago, THE MUTHERS and EBONY, IVORY & JADE.
Katon-Walden: Cirio is cool, but it's kind of odd — in EBONY, IVORY & JADE, one of the actors was Benigno Aquino's brother. So I shot an Aquino before Marcos did! (laughs) And after I married my husband and they had that little revolution down there, I gave my husband all my film people [as contacts]. It turns out all the film people were friends of the Aquinos, so they were running the country. My husband did all of his refugee work, got all of the paperwork put through by a guy who had been one of the grips for Cirio, but was at that point running the port of Manila. I'm still very close friends with a guy who had a small part in EBONY, IVORY & JADE and ended up being the number two at UNESCO.

SC: Benigno was detained when those movies were made, right?
Katon-Walden: No, I think he was in exile. When he came back, he stepped off the plane and got shot. That was pretty much the end for Marcos. It was a very strange time. I was there during martial law. There was all kind of intrigue going on. Good guys and bad guys, but everyone would get together for dinner. (laughs)

SC: I'm a big fan of THE MUTHERS. It's such an oddball movie.
Katon-Walden: Well, it was made without a script! They sent us one script, but when we got there they said, *"We're throwing that out."* Every couple of days they'd give us some pages. We were just trying to keep it coherent in our own heads. People were throwing in lines about nail polish — it was absolutely absurd. But the fun part was the four of us running through the jungle, and we had a really great time. My Girl Scouts loved that movie.

SC: I really get a charge out of your stunt double in those Santiago movies — the guy who does the back-flips.
Katon-Walden: Yeah, we put the little Afro wig on him and he looked just like me! And I have a feeling he was getting paid more than me! (laughs) Actually, I did a lot of the stunts myself, which was really stupid in retrospect. I'm surprised I'm sitting here talking to you right now. For the first movie I did [in the Philippines], I had a stunt double, but then when they found out that I could do a lot of the stunts — well, on the next movie they kept saying my stunt double was "en route." He never got there! (laughs) I'm still waiting for my stunt double!

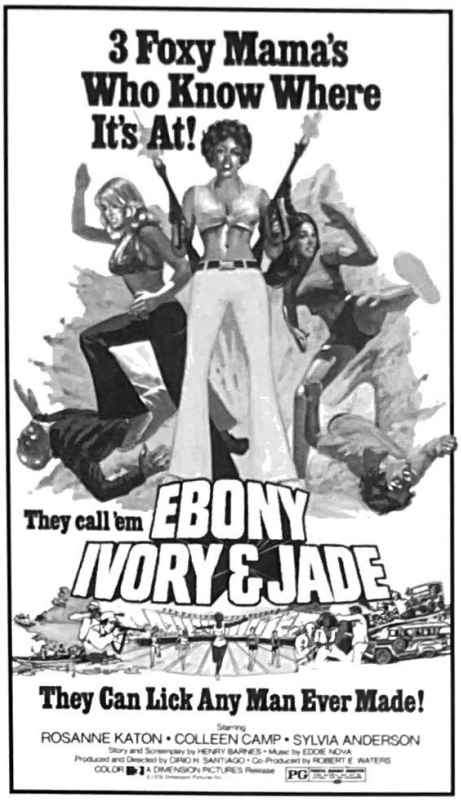
SC: What kind of stunts did they have you doing?
Katon-Walden: They'd say, *"Rosanne, see at the end of that cliff over there? That's the location."* I'd say, "Well how do I get over there?" *"We're all going to walk along this precipice..."* So I'd walk along the precipice with the crew, but I'd notice a gap of eight feet in front of me and eight feet behind me. I'd look over, and sure enough, the camera guy is filming me walking alone across the precipice! Then there was the time they said, *"We have a rope bridge we want you to run across."* Of course there are sharp, pointy rocks seventy feet below the rope bridge. *"When we say 'Action!' you're going to run across the rope bridge!"* They said, *"Action!"* I ran across the bridge, and the wood was so rotten it was breaking under my feet! I really had to charge across that thing before it collapsed under me! And then I had to stay there and stew for an hour and a half on the other side because they had to drive miles down the river in order to cross it and come back to get me!

SC: Did you enjoy working with Jeanne Bell?
Katon-Walden: Oh yes, she's great. She still looks amazing, too. I run into her from time to time. She lives out here, but she has a house in Aspen and in all these other places. She married a founder of Ace Home Loans, this billionaire.

SC: Is it true she registered the name "McDonald's" in the Philippines?
Katon-Walden: Oh yeah, she registered a lot of names. She's really smart. (laughs) She's very, very crafty. She had all kinds of stuff going on. When she was dating Richard Burton, she wanted to write a book — but she wasn't exactly the scholarly type, so she kept a tape recorder under the bed to record whatever he said! (laughs) And those were the days before cassettes, so she really had to plot and plan, turn it on and turn it off — how she managed it, I have no idea!

SC: I wonder if she knows that Vivica Fox's character in KILL BILL was named after her.
Katon-Walden: I didn't even think of that! I'll have to ask her next time I see her. Yeah, it turns out Quentin Tarantino loves us! I'm glad somebody saw all of these movies. I think all of us know that he's got this thing about our movies, so we always

look for little hints in his work. I just think he's great. RESERVOIR DOGS is one of my favorites.


3 Foxy Mama's Who Know Where It's At!
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They Can Lick Any Man Ever Made!
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Story and Screenplay by HENRY BARNES • Music by EDDIE NOVA
Produced and Directed by CIRIO H. SANTIAGO • Co-Produced by ROBERT E. WATERS
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SC: I watched CHESTY ANDERSON, US NAVY the other night. What kind of production was that?
Katon-Walden: Chaotic. That's another one where we had new pages every day, three directors — after a while it was like, "How do I get out of this?!" It was one absurd situation after another. I think I stayed on just to watch Timothy Carey around the Craft Services table! He was certifiable. I mean, he was climbing the walls. They almost had to get a net just to pull him over so he could say his lines, and then he'd wander off again. It was insane. They had all these garbage trucks around, and girlfriends of the investors — when I wasn't laughing at what was going on, I was reading a book in the corner. I'll put it that way.

SC: You're very good in that pool room scene with Scatman Crothers.
Katon-Walden: I worked with Scatman a couple of times. I actually did love scenes with Scatman! (laughs) I played his girlfriend on some television show. You've never done anything 'til you've had a guy with loose dentures come after you for a kiss! Yikes! I was really young at the time, and playing his girlfriend — a likely candidate — and we had this big kissing scene. His dentures kept slipping. That was it. I thought I was in show business!

SC: Did you talk to Jeanne Bell about becoming a Playmate when the two of you were making THE MUTHERS?
Katon-Walden: No! At the time, it hadn't even come up on my radar that Jeanne had been a Playmate. I found out about Jeanne later. The first time I heard that you could even do *Playboy*, I was acting in a TV movie called THE NIGHT THEY TOOK MISS BEAUTIFUL with Lillian Müller, who had been Playmate of the Year [1976]. But I really didn't give it that much thought until later, when somebody else said, *"Let me bring you in."* I just kind of bopped in off the street. It was really not a calculated decision at all. It did not even come up to the level of a whim. (laughs) And the turnaround was so fast — normally there's a turnaround time for magazines, especially *Playboy* — but it seems like as soon as I went in there, I was in the magazine. It didn't even get old enough for me to have second thoughts!

SC: Playboy had a lead time of 5 months, I think. Why did it happen so fast?
Katon-Walden: Probably because it had been a few years since they had had a minority Playmate.

SC: You did some public appearances for Playboy, like the "Date with Cosmopolitan's Bachelor of the Month" and the "Athlete's Foot/Playboy Celebrity Road Race." How did that work? Did you have to do a certain number of those?
Katon-Walden: No, they were offered to us, and we had a choice of doing them or not doing them. We got paid for each one. In retrospect, I should've done more of them.

SC: Did you enjoy being part of the Playboy world?
Katon-Walden: I had a great time. I didn't realize that when I became a Playmate, I was joining a sorority, but that's really what it is. Hey, you only have one life, and being a Playmate during this one has been a hoot. I have no problem with it at all. The only thing that might've given me pause was to think, "Gee, how am I going to present this to my kids, if I'm going to have kids?" But by the time I had kids, being a *Playboy* Playmate was more like being a Ziegfeld Follies girl than just being naked in a magazine! (laughs) It's kind of an institution now.

SC: So your daughter is proud to have a mom who's a Playmate.
Katon-Walden: Oh yeah, she thinks it's cool, all of her friends think it's cool. She enjoys it when someone says, *"You know Jamaica?" "Yeah!" "Well, her mother's a Playmate!" "Wow!"* (laughs) It's kind of like, *"If you didn't think Jamaica was gorgeous before, the fact that her mother's a Playmate cinches it!"* And it's funny because my daughter looks very little like me. She looks exactly like Natalie Portman. It's the weirdest thing. My husband doesn't look like Natalie Portman. I don't look like Natalie Portman. My daughter looks so much like Natalie Portman that she was asked to be a look-a-like for one of those look-a-like agencies! She even has a mole on her cheek! (laughs) We live in Los Angeles, so every once in a while people will stop her. It's hilarious. It's always at some point when we introduce her to someone, at some point they will say, *"Has anyone ever told you..."* (laughs)

SC: Have you appeared at any GlamourCons?
Katon-Walden: I've done a few. Not many. I think maybe my autographed photos are worth slightly more because of that. I am the only Playmate whose autographed photos are tax deductible, by the way! (laughs) That's because 100% of what I sell goes to Op USA for children's programs. People can actually get a tax write-off. They'll get a receipt for their taxes, and I can go buy softball equipment for street kids in Central America or something like that. Baseball equipment is expensive. I mean, ridiculously expensive.

SC: If someone wants to send a donation to Op USA, but they want the money to go specifically to one of your programs...
Katon-Walden: They can specify for "Rosanne's programs" or "Children's programs," because I'm basically involved with all of the children's programs. I think that if I do have a talent in this area, it's for anticipating some of the needs of the children. I'm a firm believer in the arts being a part of a pre-school curriculum in a third world country. People will say, *"Why teach them that?"* I think it helps you become not only a better person, but it helps you make better ethical choices. I think there's a connection there. We also find that very often, with sick children, if you don't buy them toys, guess what? The antibiotics don't work! You can't jumpstart their immune systems when they're that sick and depressed. Toys are really important. We once got a donation of 300 Kermit the Frogs that we brought to a refugee camp in Malaysia. (laughs) And the kids had a great time! We have pictures of kids in complete body casts clutching Kermit by the neck! For weeks, the children held on to them and played with them. We got the donation from a department store — they had used them in their window display, but of course the Kermits were out of their boxes and they didn't know what to do with them, so they donated them to Op USA. We put 'em in a box and shipped them to Malaysia, and it made a huge difference. Even the parents delighted in watching the children play with the Kermits. It's true medicine. Tell that to an insurance company! (laughs) They'd rather continue paying for the antibiotic that's not working than to throw a soccer ball into the mix.

SC: Are you aware that your episode of PINK LADY AND JEFF is on DVD?
Katon-Walden: No! Really?! (laughs) My kids will really enjoy getting a look at that. I don't think I've even mentioned it to them, because it seemed so impossible for them to see it. That sounds like a great Father's Day gift for my husband. Those Pink Ladies had a great thing going. They traveled with their own masseuse! PINK LADY AND JEFF — what were they thinking?! (laughs) I mean, of all the shows that have been on American television, I think that's the one that was the least likely to be on prime time.

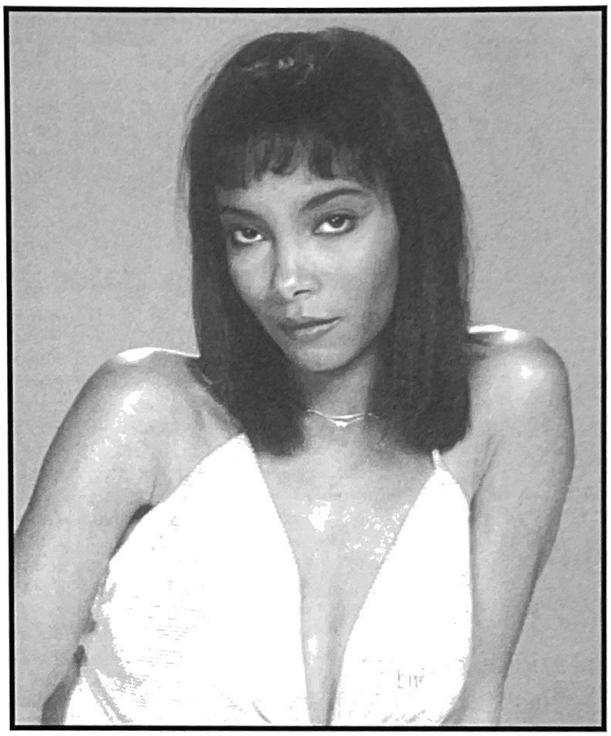
Jeanne Bell and Rosanne Katon in THE MUTHERS

SC: Well, that PLAYBOY ROLLER DISCO AND PAJAMA PARTY special was on prime time.

Katon-Walden: Yeah, but with *Playboy*, a lot of their odd stuff gets on. When the networks hear the name *Playboy*, it's usually reason enough for them to be interested — but PINK LADY AND JEFF? What a weird idea! And the girls only spoke phonetic English, so they couldn't even talk to Jeff! They were very nice, though. They were always wrapped up in their mink coats.

SC: Around the same time, you also co-starred with other Playmates in LUNCH WAGON and MOTEL HELL.

Katon-Walden: Yeah, in MOTEL HELL I got turned into beef jerky. No — people jerky. Human jerky? (laughs) I don't know what you'd call it. My daughter gets a kick out of that one. LUNCH WAGON was... (laughs) I have no idea what that movie was trying to be! There were some good people in that one — Rose Marie, Chuck McCann, Dick Van Patten — but it's a mess!



SC: Jack Hill mentions on the DVD of THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS that you took a break from acting in the early 1980's and spent time in Nicaragua.

Katon-Walden: I first went in 1982. I was on the first artists' delegation, which was basically this big lefty thing — it had the guy who won the Oscar for that documentary on the Vietnam War [HEARTS AND MINDS' Peter Davis]. This was the first delegation of artists that ever went down there. I'm kind of a contrarian — I said, "Look, if it's just going to be all these big liberals going down there, we're only going to get one side of the story. Can I bring some Republicans?" They said, *"Sure! But can you find one that will go?"* I found this ultra-conservative, very "connected" Catholic from the Knights of Malta who had the phone number of the Pope's secretary in his pocket! (laughs) So we flew down there and got to see the good, the bad and the ugly of what was going on. The delegation wanted to get in to meet with the ambassador, who of course wouldn't meet with a bunch of lefties. My guy made one phone call and we were ushered in for a meeting — he was really, really conservative, OK? Well, afterwards, in the middle of the night, these priests came up to us and asked, *"Can we talk to him?"* They took him away, and when he came back...I don't know, I guess he had a nervous breakdown or something, because he was singing "Viva la Revolución!" (laughs) Oh, it was crazy. Everyone was sleeping with the junta... (laughs) I've gone a few times since. If you go to the Op USA website, you can see some of the programs we have there. We rebuilt a couple of villages in Santa Rosa after a big storm and mudslides killed something like 30,000 people. I'm still kind of involved with Nicaragua — unlike everyone else who was down there saying that they were protecting the Nicaraguans. None of them are down there now, and Nicaragua still has the same problems they always had.

SC: Between your time in the Philippines and Nicaragua, you think maybe somebody has a file on you?

Katon-Walden: Oh, I know there's a file on me! And I know that there's a mistake in my file, so I can always tell when someone's read it because they'll blurt out this blooper — and the only place you can find this blooper is in my file! (laughs) The mistake is that my file says I'm from Nicaragua. So every year, some of our friends get a phone call and someone will ask them, *"How's Richard Walden and his Nicaraguan wife?"* and they'll go, *"Who is this? She's Jamaican, she's not Nicaraguan! What are you talking about?!"* They're just doing their check-up. We ran into Jerry Brown once — *"Oh, hi Richard! I heard you married a Nicaraguan woman!"* [Groans] "Oh God, he's read my file."

SC: See, you try to do something good and people don't trust you.

Katon-Walden: I know all these State Department and CIA people, and when you work in international relief — unlike what they kept saying in BEYOND BORDERS, *"Oh, the CIA would never be involved"* — they're always trying to get us to work for them, and we're always saying "no!" They're always trying to weasel some information out of us. Basically, the State Department is hopeful that international relief people will give them information, which would be really terrible. It would just jeopardize everybody in the field. Then people start thinking all international relief workers are CIA.

SC: You did a few independent movies in the '80s — most notably Julie Dash's critically acclaimed short ILLUSIONS, which I saw at the Museum of Modern Art a number of years ago. Did you do your own singing in that?

Katon-Walden: No, all of that was done before I came in — which is strange, I know, given the story, with my character coming in to sing for someone else.

SC: You were also in Martha Coolidge's first film, THE CITY GIRL.

Katon-Walden: That was back in the days when independent films had a really hard time getting distribution. It got a release, but just on the art film circuit. I think part of it was shot in Canada. Peter Bogdanovich was one of the producers, and Colleen Camp was in it. She's one of Martha's best friends.

SC: How did you end up in HAREM? You have such a small part in that.

Katon-Walden: The director, Arthur Joffé, is a close friend of mine. I had just had my daughter and Arthur said, *"I'm doing this movie, I want you to come to New York and do a little part in it just so we can hang out."* (laughs) That's basically how that happened! I played Nastassja Kinski's friend at the beginning of the movie. I've known Nastassja for a very long time. She's really lovely, and a true survivor.

SC: You were in a short film called RICH, which I've never seen and know nothing about. What's that?

Katon-Walden: I have no idea! RICH? [Pause] Oh, I think I know what that is! Oh my God — I didn't even know that was edited! If that's what I think it is, it was shot at the Watts Towers. I have a vague recollection of it, yeah. Somebody asked me to be in their movie, and it was just one day. I'm pretty sure that might be it. That's so weird. I haven't thought about that since I did it. I've done a lot of things that I haven't seen — and sometimes on purpose. (laughs) I would make movies to fly places, basically. Who knew that cable and video would come along and reveal all of my escapades?

Rosanne Katon, Rainbeaux Smith and Jo Johnston in Jack Hill's THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS

SC: You've also done stand-up comedy. Did your experiences as an actress and international relief worker form the backbone of your routines?

Katon-Walden: Sometimes. The hard part of stand-up is that you don't have a lot of time do the setup. Generally, I was either the opener or the middle act, so I got a certain amount of minutes to

be on stage. I could only go into that stuff when I was the middle act and had more time on stage. Oh! Do you want to hear the worst thing that happened to me when I was doing stand-up? A woman threw her wooden leg at me!

SC: What?! Where was this?!
Katon-Walden: At a club in central California! I guess she didn't like the act! (laughs) She threw her prosthesis at me, and I wasn't even doing my stuff about Cambodia and land mines! I felt that was a badge of honor.

SC: How many years did you do stand-up?
Katon-Walden: I did it until my daughter was in school full-time. I did it during the years she was in preschool. What was great about that was that I had certain hours that I would do my stand-up. I really felt like a W-O-M-A-N. I'd cook dinner for my husband, help with homework, go out and do my stand-up, and then come back home. Once my daughter was in school full-time, it wasn't worth it anymore. The hassles, the stress, just getting everything done...

SC: Do you enjoy motherhood?
Katon-Walden: I enjoy it a lot. My daughter is a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania now. My son plays the cello — he's a wonderful cellist. I loved being a soccer mom, loved being a Girl Scout mom. I was a great Girl Scout mom! My Girl Scouts loved EBONY, IVORY & JADE! (laughs) No, they really loved it! Whenever I needed to do something, I would put that movie on, make cookies, come out and they'd still be watching it. Not a lot of kids' moms could get away with that. I took them to RAND for their first research paper and they met Condoleeza Rice! For "take your daughter to work," I took them to the V.P. of Universal and they pitched stories to him! (laughs)

SC: Did you teach them how to fire a machine gun?
Katon-Walden: Uh, noooo... (laughs) But you never know when that knowledge will come in handy — especially around here. OK, people always ask me, *"Aren't you scared to go to all these dangerous places?"* I've gone everywhere — Bosnia, Cambodia — and nothing's happened to me because I know where the fighting is. In those places, there's kind of a karma thing when it comes to war zones. Nobody will steal your pocket book because they don't want to have that bad karma following them around. When the bullets start flying, people think it will be attracted to the person with the worst karma. So you know where the bullets are, you know where the fighting is, and you stay away from there. That's how people survive. In L.A., you don't where the bullets are going to come from! I got a bullet hole in my car!

SC: You went on POLITICALLY INCORRECT two and a half years ago and debated with Jerry Falwell over, among other topics, stem cell research.
Katon-Walden: My son has autism, so I'm very much involved in his treatments. He's doing great. He's closer to the John Nash than the RAIN MAN type of autism. He gets 40 hours of speech and behavioral therapy — the state does 6 hours, I do 34 of it. I had always been interested in looking at phages as an alternative to antibiotics, because there's now only one antibiotic that works on several forms of TB. One of the things my husband and I have always talked about is my going to Tbilisi [in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia] to look into phages to possibly use them in our Op USA programs. While looking into that, I worked with a French doctor who's been doing some stem cell research there, and they are actually injecting stem cells into autistic people and getting really good results. So I was invited to go there and meet some of the people and see what's going on. It's basically an informational trip that kind of fell into my lap, but I think it would be a really good opportunity for me. Whether or not it's something that I think might be good for my son, or for anyone's child right now, remains to be seen. Because my husband runs an international relief agency, we have access to a lot of people, and we find out about a lot of programs that other people might not be aware of, and stem cell research is only being done in countries that allow it. The U.S. government doesn't allow it.

SC: That program your husband started with NASA to locate land mines has received a lot of press coverage.
Katon-Walden: Actually, that program was my contribution to Op USA. (laughs) Everyone just assumes it was his program, and I think my husband didn't do / CONTINUED on PAGE 47

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From CUCKOO Patient to DEADWOOD Doc: An Interview With BRAD DOURIF

By BRETT TAYLOR

I first noticed Brad Dourif when I stumbled across an already-forgotten made-for-TV vampire movie called I, DESIRE (1982). The star was the bland David Naughton, but the show was easily stolen by his edgy co-star Dourif. This impression was confirmed by EXORCIST III (1990), in which Dourif seemed so intense he might explode at any moment. In fact he did, when he starred as a man who undergoes a mini-nuclear meltdown in SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION (1990). For a while the actor seemed stuck playing a stream of killers and psychopaths. Dourif has more range than this stereotyping might suggest. Dourif has employed accents — Brooklynese in EYES OF LAURA MARS (1978), Scandin-avian in HEAVEN'S GATE (1980). He's played a man with cerebral palsy in COMMON BONDS (1990) and a "human computer" in David Lynch's DUNE (1984).

Clearly he likes to work, with somewhere around eighty film and telefilm appearances since his career took off on a prodigious note with ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST in 1975. And that's not even counting guest spots on TV shows including MIAMI VICE, THE EQUALIZER and MURDER, SHE WROTE, plus the odd video game or music video. It's challenging to try and predict where he'll turn up next. A political thriller like Ken Loach's HIDDEN AGENDA (1990)? Outer space monster flicks? Dourif has done them: CRITTERS 4 (1991) and ALIEN: RESURRECTION (1997). A made for TV remake of ESCAPE FROM WITCH MOUNTAIN (1995)? Offbeat independent films like THE HORSEPLAYER (1990) and LONDON KILLS ME (1991)? Dourif has done them all, plus a Dario Argento giallo (TRAUMA, 1993), the occasional dumb comedy (SENSELESS, 1998) and the offensively idiotic AMOS AND ANDREW (1993), as well as a number of literary adaptations — John Huston's film of Flannery O'Connor's Southern Gothic WISE BLOOD (1979), the German production GRUPPENBILD MIT DAME (1977), Milos Forman's RAGTIME (1981) — not to mention MISSISSIPPI BURNING (1988) and the miniseries THE GUYANA TRAGEDY: THE STORY OF JIM JONES (1980). Then there's his steady gig as the voice of Chucky the killer doll in the never-ending CHILD'S PLAY series. For a few years he somehow found time to work in a teaching stint at Columbia.

Dourif hails from Huntington, West Virginia. Though his family was not poor (his grandparents ran a paint factory, while his widowed mother remarried to a golfer), nonetheless he retains a couple of telltale Appalachian traits: there's the slight accent, of course (though nowhere to be heard in the recent LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS). But, more to the point, there's the traditional taboo against putting on airs. Hightoned self-analysis isn't his thing. Ask Dourif about one of his films, be it WISE BLOOD or a mega-production like HEAVEN'S GATE and he might well say something along the lines of "It was a job. I did it and that was that." He also seems reluctant to criticize anyone he's worked for, even if it's the notorious Michael Cimino.

Now in his early fifties, Dourif shows no signs of slowing down. His role as the slimy Grima Wormtongue in THE TWO TOWERS made him a familiar face to those too young to recall Forman's CUCKOO'S NEST, the film that launched the actor into the movie world in the big way when he was just in his mid-twenties. CUCKOO'S garnered the young actor an Academy Award nomination, as well as the British equivalent of the Oscar and a Golden Globe. But he'd already made an impression on stage, beginning with an apprenticeship with New York's Circle Rep company. Dourif was kind enough to discuss career highlights.

Brad Dourif and Frances McDormand in HIDDEN AGENDA

SHOCK CINEMA: You grew up in West Virginia, where your mother was an actress, right? Do you think that made acting a more accessible thing to you?
Brad Dourif: I would think so. That's the world I grew up in. But, I mean, it's impossible for me to say because I'm used to the world I grew up in.

SC: Did she encourage you to become an actor?
Dourif: She never encouraged it or discouraged it.

SC: You decided to go to New York and take Sanford Meisner's acting class? Did he teach the Method?
Dourif: You know what? I don't know *what* the Method is and I don't think anybody ever taught it. Basically there's a theatre called the Group Theatre, where all those people come from. Stanislavsky developed this thing called the Method. But he was not American, and he did not teach in the United States. He had some actors come over, but they did their own versions of what it was. Fundamentally he said the one thing that all great actors had in common was a powerful inner life. So that's where he focused. The Group Theatre made a distinction between what a movie star is and what an actor is. An actor is somebody who tries to disappear into the role. All you see and all you feel is this human being they're trying to create. Whereas a star is somebody where you always see the act. And that was really what the Group Theatre tried to make. And basically Sandy really just taught how to do a scene.

SC: He didn't encourage you to live the role, so to speak?
Dourif: No. I don't know if you would call that the Method, that's just the way he taught.

SC: Any memories of the plays you did?
Dourif: I did a lot in school. I did Christopher Marlowe's DR. FAUSTUS. That kind of thing.

SC: But it was RED RYDER that got you on the map?
Dourif: Yeah. WHEN YOU COMIN' BACK, RED RYDER? was the first big thing I did. It was off-Broadway.

SC: That was the original production, so I imagine writer Mark Medoff was there.
Dourif: Mark came in during the final rehearsals. We did a workshop production of it. We didn't do any revisions, maybe some slight cuts. The play was intact.

SC: Years later, when they made a movie of that play, did they offer it to you?
Dourif: Yeah. I turned it down. I was sick of doin' it, and I didn't want to work with Marjoe Gortner.

SC: Milos Forman came to see the play and cast you in ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST. He must have seen something in your part that was similar to CUCKOO's Billy Bibbit. The same sensitivity.
Dourif: No. I think they were very different. He just liked the work and he figured I could do it.

SC: Peter Biskind claimed in his book EASY RIDERS, RAGING BULLS that it was a very unpleasant shoot.
Dourif: No. It wasn't unpleasant. I mean, we were in an insane asylum shooting every day and that color of green got a little old. I just don't understand how havin' a job doin' what you love to do is unpleasant.

SC: But before CUCKOO'S NEST you did a movie called SPLIT. Kind of an underground movie? A hippie/druggie thing?
Dourif: It never really got put together. I don't think it was ever put out. It was a hippie thing, but not a druggie thing. I was the lead. It was totally made-up dialogue. It was bad.

SC: What about W.W. AND THE DIXIE DANCEKINGS (1975)? That was your first Hollywood part.
Dourif: I was cut out of it. I played a ticket-taker in a drive-in movie theatre. I did a scene with Burt Reynolds. He was a really nice guy. I was doin' a play and he came in and made sure he saw me and knew what I could do.

SC: Do you think European directors like Forman are more character-oriented in their approach?
Dourif: No. I don't think you could draw a distinction like that at all. What makes a director great is they have their own trip and their own specific vision of things, particular things. Other people just don't. It doesn't matter what country they come from.

SC: When you go from more intimate productions to big super-productions like HEAVEN'S GATE, DUNE...
Dourif: LORD OF THE RINGS...

SC: Do you feel on an expensive production like those that you get swallowed up? Like the director has less time contact with you?
Dourif: No. Directors have the same amount of contact with you. Ultimately, no matter where you are, the moment of truth is coming. It's just that there's a lot more departments and there's a certain...there can be a certain impersonality in the whole...everybody comes to defend their departments a little bit more and there's more money at stake. That kind of thing. But that depends. That wasn't so true in LORD OF THE RINGS. It was much more of a family-feeling about it.

SC: Was there a lot of downtime?
Dourif: Yeah, but, God, it was gorgeous to be there [in New Zealand]. It gave me more time to work on the accent, which was difficult. A sort of British accent. If you were in a battle, then you had to be there for a long time. The battle scenes were very, very involved. They were constantly changing the coverage. They shot a lot of footage on that movie. For the battle scenes, they had a three hour to one minute ratio. For every minute of film there was three hours they didn't use.

SC: Sounds like material for more "special edition" DVDs.
Dourif: No. It was just thrown on the cutting room floor. I was there for six weeks and I came back for a week later on. Then I went back for about four and a half. Those special editions, they're better. They have more of the richness from the books that's not there in the shorter versions. But Peter Jackson's best work is still HEAVENLY CREATURES. Just amazing, perfect.

SC: What about TV movies? You've done quite a few.
Dourif: They're faster. It's easier in a way.

SC: In SERGEANT MATLOVICH VS. THE U.S. AIR FORCE (1978) you played a real-life soldier on trial for his sexual orientation. Wasn't that a controversial subject to tackle on TV at that time?
Dourif: I guess the subject was and is controversial. But nothing aimed at me. I met him [Matlovich]. He was on the set.

SC: You continued doing TV movies in the '90s, such as IF LOOKS COULD KILL (1996).
Dourif: I remember that. I had to make kiss Antonio Sabato, had to make out with him.

SC: What are your criteria for doing a role?
Dourif: When I'm asked that I just say I'm a whore. I like to work and if the money's good, well, all right.

SC: Didn't you turn down THE DEER HUNTER?
Dourif: I've turned down so many parts I can't remember them all.

SC: Why do you think John Huston wanted you for WISE BLOOD?
Dourif: He originally wanted me to play Enoch. I said no, I want to play the other part. He was like, *"Who the Hell do you think you are, kid? I'm John Huston and you don't get to do that."* But later on they decided that it was a good idea.

SC: Did Huston articulate to you just what it was about Flannery O'Connor's novel that made him want to adapt it?
Dourif: He saw it as a nihilistic rebellion. He didn't get that it was really an affirmation of Catholicism, of Christianity. Flannery O'Connor was Catholic as the day is long. And a real right-wing John Bircher. John [Huston] was a devout atheist.

SC: But Huston saw the story as a negative thing? A nihilistic statement as you said?
Dourif: Yeah, and eventually we had a discussion. We were in rehearsals. He said, *"No, no, no, it's nihilistic."* And I said, "John, that's not what I'm seeing. We've got to get on the same page, because that's not what I'm seeing. This is what I see: at this point, it looks like I've found Jesus." And he kind of looked at me when I said that and thought about what I said. He said we need to have a discussion with the writer and with the mother [Regina O'Connor] who was very concerned of Flannery. And he came back the next day and he sat down and he said, *"Jesus wins."*

SC: You convinced him.
Dourif: I didn't convince him. They convinced him. Those people were much smarter than I.

SC: Do you worry how audiences will feel about a character who's so tightly wound from the beginning?
Dourif: Are you joking? The guy is so tightly wound it's not even funny. I mean the description of the guy in the book is that to him Jesus was a dark, hooded character who moved from tree to tree in the back of his mind. The guy was completely wound up tighter than...so much that you couldn't play him.

SC: But what was it that drove him?
Dourif: He was insane. Flannery O'Connor was trying to write a Protestant thing.

SC: So he blinds himself...
Dourif: To be able to see.

SC: A very Classical theme, like OEDIPUS and KING LEAR...Did you hang out in O'Connor's Georgia studying the dialect or the local culture?
Dourif: No, I'm from the South. And he wasn't from Macon. He was from Taulkinham [O'Connor's fictional Tennessee town]. He was a hillbilly. He was more mountain than anything. I did talk to a dialect coach. I did make a decision about it. We did some work and that was it. I didn't need to work on the dialect.

SC: What's Harry Dean Stanton like to work with?
Dourif: Easy.

SC: William Hickey had such a great oddball presence onscreen. What was he like?
Dourif: Very drunk.

SC: What about Huston? A lot of people would find him an intimidating figure to work for.
Dourif: Not at all. He made movies because he loved to. And he's there to work and as long as you're on the same page and you're workin', he's happy.

SC: Was he rigid with the blocking in that old Hollywood way?
Dourif: Being rigid is fine. That's just the way he was. It doesn't mean he's rigid as a person.

What's intimidating is people's personalities. It's not what they ask you to do, it's the way they ask you. He never did that in an intimidating way. He's pretty open.

SC: Some actors described Michael Cimino as an unreasonable director and HEAVEN'S GATE as a nightmare shoot. Was that your impression?
Dourif: No, I had a really good time doin' the movie. I mean, it took forever, and it was a big waste of money. Pouring money down the drain. Just the height of extravagance. And it destroyed United Artists.

SC: Was it only the extravagance that bothered the critics? It had a dark undertone for such a big film.
Dourif: It was a dark subject. It was a very dark moment in American history. Fundamentally you have this land-grabbing and you have these cattlemen who were trying to keep everybody off. They were using the first winter to do it. They made a list of people who had gotten fined for killing cattle and they made it punishable by death and they signed death warrants and they were gonna shoot everybody on the list. And the people decided they weren't gonna sit around and take what was happening. So they got together in a group of people. The cowboys came into town and surrounded 'em. That stuff really happened and, yeah, it was a pretty dark moment. And the cattlemen were about to get wiped out. And the Cavalry came in and said, *"Amnesty, everybody."* Otherwise it would have been a pitched battle. The governor knew that he wasn't gonna be governor if it went on like that. They couldn't get away with it, with committing murder. I think it's dark when human life is considered that cheap.

SC: Your speech to the townspeople was a key moment.
Dourif: That was what it was all about. The story.

SC: You think it articulated the theme of the movie?
Dourif: The political problem. It was one of the themes, it wasn't the only one.

SC: You were offered HAIR, which was a musical. You managed playing guitar and singing in a movie called ISTANBUL (1985).
Dourif: Not really. I can't sing my way out of a wet paper bag.

SC: You were in DUNE and BLUE VELVET (1986). Is David Lynch as strange as his films?
Dourif: David's very sweet. I miss him. He's very normal-looking and kind of preppie, almost. Not anymore, but he was. He just has a strange mind.

SC: Didn't he want to do plastic surgery on an actor's face for DUNE?
Dourif: He wanted to put a hole through Jurgen Prochnow's cheek so he that he could stick a tube through it so that could shoot the gas coming out of this tube in a certain way.

SC: And what did Jurgen Prochnow say to this?
Dourif: Jurgen said yes. The insurance company and everybody else said absolutely not, he could not do it.

SC: You worked with Dean Stockwell in DUNE and BLUE VELVET.
Dourif: I did a few scenes with him. He's a good actor. He likes to play poker and he's a bit of a good old boy in an odd way.

Dourif as Grima Wormtongue in THE TWO TOWERS

SC: Jack Nance was also in both films.
Dourif: Jack Nance was somebody I got along with really well.

SC: Dennis Hopper had sobered up by the time of BLUE VELVET.
Dourif: Hopper was real programmed and a good guy and easy to be around.

SC: Didn't Lynch offer you a part on TWIN PEAKS? Do you remember what the part was?
Dourif: Yes. It was the guy that owned the hotel. What was his name?

SC: Oh, the Richard Beymer part?
Dourif: Yeah. I was doing a movie and I couldn't get out of it. A Tobe Hooper movie [SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION].

SC: Weren't you offered a part in WILD AT HEART?
Dourif: I didn't want to do it. The part was too small, and I'd already done one small part for him (Lynch) and I just said, I'm not gonna sit around and watch other people act. If he wants me to work for him, I wanna do it, but not a small part.

SC: You did a little part for Spike Lee in JUNGLE FEVER (1991).
Dourif: I wanted to work with Spike. I wish my part had been bigger, had more to do with the movie. But he really is a great filmmaker.

SC: SONNY BOY (1990) with David Carradine is something of a cult film.
Dourif: David's great. He was really funny in that.

SC: In drag, no less.
Dourif: He did it really straight-ahead. He was the wife of this guy, but he was this *guy* who was the wife of this other guy. He did it with this feminine point-of-view, but he was really goddamn funny.

SC: You were reunited with Sidney Lassick from CUCKOO'S NEST.
Dourif: Mmm-hmm. He's a really good actor. He comes across a bit like he does in his characters. I mean he's got that way he talks. That's Sidney.

SC: And Paul Smith was in both DUNE and SONNY BOY. A very big man.
Dourif: Paul Smith wasn't a big guy after that. Lost a lot of weight and he's a mere shadow of his former self. He was very heavy, I don't think he would have lived long had he not lost weight.

SC: Werner Herzog has an eccentric reputation. What's he like as a director?
Dourif: Very improvisational.

SC: That was SCREAM OF STONE (1991), with Donald Sutherland.
Dourif: A good guy, very reserved, loves computers. Has a lot of kids. A family man and an actor. He's got a private life and he's very private about his life. He's just this great actor.

SC: What did you think about the way the studio treated EXORCIST III?
Dourif: They fucked it up. I mean they just fucked it up, that's all there is to say. I mean, let Blatty have his movie. It certainly would have been better. And they paid in spades for it. They ruined it. They really, really, really ruined it, and they lost a lot of money on it and it was their fault. In my opinion. But George C. Scott is wonderful. And really supportive. Loved to act and loved to work, that's what he's there for. No bullshit. Really honest and really helpful.

SC: Is there a director's cut out there with a different ending?
Dourif: As far as I know Blatty never got his cut.

Brad Dourif in SONNY BOY

SC: You played a lot of killers for a while.
Dourif: It got old. One time I counted my onscreen kills for one year, and it was over fifty. That was just for one year. At least Grima [from LOTR] is not a killer. He's just a coward. He's somebody who runs from a fight.

SC: You've done a lot of TV shows: STAR TREK: VOYAGER, BABYLON 5, X-FILES. They're done a lot quicker than movies.
Dourif: There's a lot of pressure. You better be there and you better be ready.

/ CONTINUED on PAGE 47

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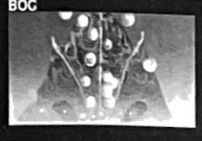
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Creature from Black Lake

Dark Star

The Devil's Rain

Super Kong (aka A*P*E)

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Barn of the Blood Llama

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Great White Death

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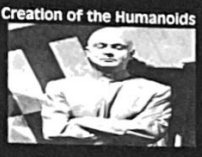
Incr. Strange Creatures


Creation of the Humanoids

Haxan

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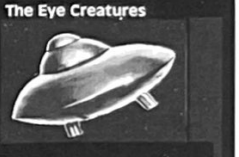
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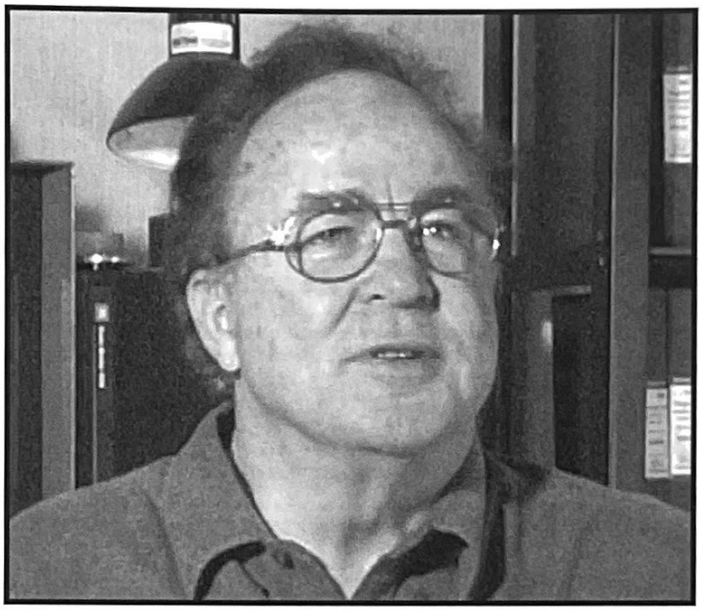
CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY AT PORKY'S: An Interview With BOB CLARK

By DAVID KONOW

It's hard to believe the same guy who made the holiday classic A CHRISTMAS STORY (1983) was also involved in DERANGED (1974), the Ed Gein biopic that truly lived up to its name. It's also hard to believe the same guy also made PORKY'S (1982), which provided the blueprint for countless horny teen T&A movies. It's also hard to believe he made RHINESTONE (1984), where Slylvester Stallone becomes a country singer, but one man did make all these films and more: Bob Clark.

Clark started his career like many directors have, making horror films. First came CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS (1972), where a hoax seance actually succeeds in bringing the dead back to life. Then came DEATHDREAM (1974), an overlooked horror gem that didn't catch on in its time but whose cult following began to grow after playing on ELVIRA'S MOVIE MACABRE. After DERANGED came BLACK CHRISTMAS (1974), which was very influential on several modern horror classics, and MURDER BY DECREE (1979), a fine Sherlock Holmes film where the legendary snoop hunts down Jack the Ripper. No one can ever predict what will fail or succeed at the box office (quoth William Goldman: no one knows anything), but the one Clark film that inexplicably flopped at the b.o. was A CHRISTMAS STORY, a labor of love he dreamed of making for over a decade that he hopes generations to come will continue to enjoy.

With every movie ever made now being remade, a number of Clark's films are in the works to be redone. "BLACK CHRISTMAS is being remade, I wouldn't have anything to do with that," he says. "I don't think I could improve that movie." He's also trying to stop MURDER BY DECREE from being made, another project one would be hard pressed to try and improve, and is very easy to screw up. Howard Stern is spearheading a remake of PORKY'S, and the rights for DEATHDREAM were bought by Oliver Hudson, son of Goldie Hawn, for his friend Eli Roth to direct. But Clark himself is planning to remake CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS "because *that* we can improve!" He continues, "We can have a lot more fun with it."



Bob Clark, director of BLACK CHRISTMAS

SHOCK CINEMA: You began your career making horror films with Alan Ormsby. How did it all get started?

Bob Clark: Alan and I met in college at the University of Miami. We acted together and did plays together at the University. The opportunity had come up to do CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS, I had written a script that was financed by Gary Goch [producer and editor of CHILDREN], who I've been associated with off and on for thirty years since then, and my brothers gave a small amount to the movie. All the actors were my college buddies. After a Canadian company picked up the rights and it did well, another Canadian company told us they liked it and wanted to finance the next movie. Alan had already been working on DEATHDREAM, which we submitted to them, and then we went to Brooksville, Florida to make it. THE NIGHT ANDY CAME HOME was the original title. We were lucky enough to get John Marley and Lynn Carlin, two fine actors to be in this $200,000 budget film.

SC: How were you able to approach them to be in the film?

Clark: I think we just went to their agent and sent them a script. I don't think I had any common friend that introduced me to John, he just liked the part, liked what he had to say, and he brought Lynn into it. Once he got involved in it, the other New York actors like Arthur Anderson, who plays the postman, were pretty well known New York actors. Meanwhile for the year in between, we got the financing to do DERANGED. The BLACK CHRISTMAS budget was $400,000, so we kept moving up in budget and quality.

SC: Why did you start your career in horror?

Clark: Horror is a form that's been part of the independent world for quite a few years. You could get together with your college buddies, make a movie, and have a market for that genre, whereas anything else is a tough sell. It was smart to go into horror films to get yourself started if you wanted to build a career. I saw CHILDREN again not too long ago and from a cinematic standpoint it's pretty well shot. I was surprised at the amount of cinematic efficiency and sophistication it had. When you have eight days to shoot it, it's tough to move the camera. I used the zoom in a way I wouldn't be using it today. The zoom was a very powerful part of '60s and '70s filmmaking. Back then it could be used effectively, we just didn't have time to do a dolly shot. Some of the movie is corny, it's partially the actors, they were not film actors. They would become good actors but we were all sort of amateurish at the time. (laughs)

SC: At the time, the major studios didn't make films about the war. Was it easier to make a film about Vietnam independently back then?

Clark: We had the autonomy to do so, and that's why the film was popular in France, Italy and the European markets because it had a cynical and critical attitude toward war and what it means to the human beings that had to do it. We had to fight Hitler, there was no doubt about it, but Vietnam was a questionable war. At the time I was anti-war. The film predicates itself on the idea that you have to pay for your sins, and small town America was the place we chose to pay off. The home front had to get a reflection of what the horror was like for the boys. I think it would have been very difficult to get a major distributor for the film. We already had a distributor before the movie, the company that financed it also had the distribution rights. I'm sure they tried to make a deal for major distribution in the States and couldn't get it.

SC: Did you feel any urgency to do the film because of the war? Did you feel it was something people had to see?

Clark: We had a chance to do any movie we wanted, that's what our Canadian partners offered us. This was the one we wanted to do. I felt it could strike a chord and needed to be stated, so we chose it.

SC: Why do you feel that people still remember the film today?

Clark: It's a scary and thoughtful film, and it's a different movie. Basically it's "The Monkey's Paw" idea to an extreme.

SC: You also gave make-up master Tom Savini a big break with the film.

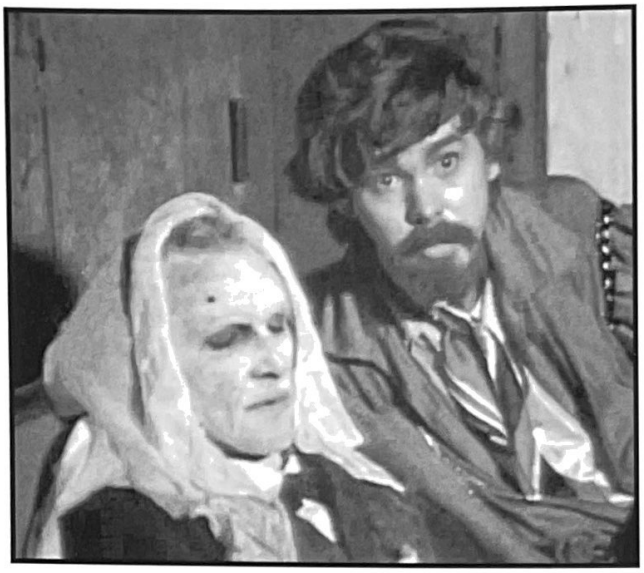
Clark: I remember being enormously pleased with his work. We were on a really tight schedule and Tom was extremely efficient. We had limited time, and he came on short notice. Tom was a very gifted, incredibly committed guy. Money is a factor in the quality of make-up, and the make-up in CHILDREN, which Alan did, was pretty amazing considering what we had to work with.

SC: When you and Alan Ormsby made DERANGED, it was a movie about Ed Gein long before serial killers, and serial killer movies, became popular.

Clark: Yeah, Alan certainly knew he was the inspiration for PSYCHO. TEXAS CHAINSAW hadn't come around yet. Roberts Blossom was quite extraordinarily gruesome, so real and believable, his mother was pretty horrible too. Again, we wanted to attack some reality.

SC: Did you feel there was anything in the film that was too tough for an audience to handle?
Clark: I thought the movie overall was extreme, that's why my name's not on it! Not that I didn't admire it, but it was just too grisly, too grim. It was more grim and graphic than I would have [made it]. That's not a criticism, it's just part of my nature. As I demonstrated in BLACK CHRISTMAS, it's considered the sneaky father of slasher movies but there's almost no slash in it. It's intimated and pointed at, but it's not graphic.

SC: BLACK CHRISTMAS was one of the first horror films that I can think of that had shots from the killer's point of view, which HALLOWEEN did later. You also used the same technique in MURDER BY DECREE.
Clark: For BLACK CHRISTMAS, I was looking for the audience to identify, in a sense, with the mystery of what was happening. Something was clearly going on, that means it was in effect humanizing the horror. We are with, we are part of the mind of this psychotic, so when he first speaks over the phone, that's the first time we understand that we're hearing the person we have been being in a sense. It was a character, it ran through the whole (thing), it wasn't a moment here, a moment there. I didn't want to show the character so his point of view became subjective. People have said that I originated that form, I don't think so. I've seen it before, I remember one film that did a bit of it, and it wasn't a horror film either, but when people ask me I can't remember the title! In MURDER BY DECREE, I clearly didn't want to reveal this monster until we were well into the story. I didn't want to repeat myself, but it was part of the genre now, and it was appropriate.



"Orville" and Alan Ormsby in
CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS

SC: Margot Kidder's character was the most liberated of the women, which was very close to her real personality. Did she bring more of herself to the role or was she written that way?
Clark: We wrote the role that way, and we went for Margot because she's got the looseness, the wildness and free will that made that girl believable. One of the things I've always been happy about with BLACK CHRISTMAS was it was, if not the first then almost the first movie to treat college people the way they are instead of the beach blanket bikini nonsense. They're quite realistic, they react in intelligent ways, they're not silly, they're actually pretty clever. We were also careful to kill off good characters. We didn't want to fall into the trap of where you kill off the stupid one first...

SC: Killing off all the day players...
Clark: Exactly. The first was the slightly prissy but nice, neat girl, she's concerned about other people. Then the house mother, who's the clown of the piece. The good people fall under the evil spell also.

SC: BLACK CHRISTMAS also had great phone stalking moments that reminded me of WHEN A STRANGER CALLS.
Clark: I don't know where it was used [before], I'm sure it has been used, not quite to this extent. It's something about being able to project horror in a way you can't deal with. On a phone they try to catch him with the wiretapping they had at the time. But it invades you. That horrible, psychotic person is there with you in a sense. It's so easy, all he has to do is get you to answer the phone, and he's got you. And where is he? There's a mystery to a phone, he could be anywhere. That guy uses the house, I'm sure we weren't the first to do that, but the first to be famous for it I think. (laughs)

SC: I also think BLACK CHRISTMAS was the first horror film to take place during that holiday. Why did you decide on Christmas?
Clark: It's the contrast. You have all this imagery around and you can distort them. We were able to play against the Christmas music and the Christmas decorations which are supposed to mean joy and peace forever, but meanwhile the real world is still out there. It's seemed an idea I hadn't seen tested before so let's move it into that.

SC: You had a great cast on MURDER BY DECREE. What was it like working with that caliber of actors?
Clark: It was wonderful. We had Christopher Plummer, I had to go over to Spain to talk him into doing it, and once he fell into place, we could have had anyone we wanted. Clearly John Hopkins, who wrote the screenplay, was highly regarded. The British are much more practical with acting. You don't hear the nonsense of *"Don't give me a line reading."* James Mason said, *"Dear boy, just*

Bob Clark's partner in grime: ALAN ORMSBY
by David Konow

With Alan Ormsby, Bob Clark had a multi-talented and imaginative partner to go into films with. They first joined forces on CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS, where Alan starred and provided the make-up effects. "I made student films in college but CHILDREN was the first time I was exposed to feature film-making," he says. "Bob Clark had the money, we were both horror movie fans, and it was the most commercial type of film to make at the time.

"It was fun, but low-budget and slapdash, very different from the way films are made in Hollywood," he continues. "I guess I learned more about acting than anything else, mainly because I was so lousy at it!" Ormsby also says he "learned the value of a decent costume" on CHILDREN, and indeed his ridiculous hippie duds appear as if they were raided from Greg Brady's closet (or perhaps he borrowed them from Greydon Clark after his appearance in DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN).

Next Alan took a turn writing for Clark with DEATHDREAM. "The entire story came to me in a flash and I wrote it in about two weeks," Ormsby continues. "It was my first screenplay and was shot as written." Many have pointed out the similarities between DEATHDREAM and the classic horror tale "The Monkey's Paw," and Ormsby says DREAM was definitely an updating of the classic horror tale. "*The Monkey's Paw* is one of my all time favorite stories and one of the three best supernatural tales ever written, the other two being *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Beckoning Fair One*. Even now, re-reading these stories gives me a chill."

As a long time fan of the film, I loved the idea of a vampire/zombie creature being a metaphor for the horrors of war. Ormsby says part of the inspiration for Andy, who returns from the dead after getting killed in Vietnam, came from a one act play by Irwin Shaw called *Bury the Dead*. "I wanted to dramatize the psychology, as I saw it, that got us into the war in the first place," he says. "This seemed like an original way to explore that." Ormsby also wanted the film to be "both scary and sad," which the film achieved well, especially with its poignant ending. Ormsby also agrees that it was easier to make a film about the Vietnam war working in the low budget, independent world. "We weren't censored or second guessed by anyone," he says.

DEATHDREAM is now finally receiving an overdue DVD release and, as previously mentioned, Eli Roth may remake it as well. I was one of many fans who first saw the film on ELVIRA'S MOVIE MACABRE, and it's stayed with me ever since. As for why he feels DEATHDREAM is still remembered, Ormsby says, "It's actually about something, which automatically differentiates it from most of today's movies. And of course we're in a war again."

For his next screenplay, DERANGED, Alan stepped into the director's chair for the first time as well. Ormsby was ahead of his time with DERANGED in that he not only made a serial killer film long before the genre became trendy, but it was one of the first mockumentaries as well. "The producer wanted to make a movie about Ed Gein," he says. "I did some research and the story was so revolting that I decided it could only be done as a sort of black comedy. I'm glad you realize it's a 'faux documentary.' Not many people seem to understand that the narrator is meant to be droll."

Ultimately, when Alan looks back on the horror films he and Bob launched their careers with, he simply says, "They were fun to make. There was kind of a communal feeling about the process that I haven't experienced since."

tell me how you want to say it, you do it the way you want it done, and I'll say it correctly!" Same thing with John Gielgud. *"Robert, say it the way you want it, and I'll do it the way I have to do it!"*

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SC: After making your horror films and thrillers, your career took another turn with A CHRISTMAS STORY, which is now a holiday classic.

Clark: Actually A CHRISTMAS STORY was before any of the others existed. It was 1969 when I first started working on that screenplay, so it was there before BLACK CHRISTMAS, CHILDREN or any of the others. It was thirteen or fourteen years later that it got its chance. It was there hovering all the time. (laughs) It's based partially on a book, *In God We Trust*; it's based on short stories by Jean Shepherd, some of them are in the book, some were told when he spoke in the college circuit, some of them were never written down. It's a combination of about eight or ten of Jean Shepherd's tales or short stories woven into the screenplay. Not all of them took place at Christmas, I just put them into the Christmas framework. I loved Shepherd's sense of humor, his narration. I wasn't just creating a Christmas story, I was creating a Christmas world. It's a portrait of Christmas in Shepherd's skewed, eccentric, edgy way. It took so long getting it done, fighting for it and struggling to the death to get it released, but it was a joy doing it. It was one of those projects that was spiritually and emotionally working on every level. Most of my films have been a great joy, PORKY'S was wonderful because I was recreating my childhood (laughs), but A CHRISTMAS STORY may have a little bit of an edge where all the pieces came together. When it had an impact and became so much a part of the country's consciousness, that's joyful too.

SC: How did PORKY'S come together?

Clark: I started collecting sexual coming of age stories from around the country. There's nothing in PORKY'S that basically isn't true. In Nebraska, California, Michigan or Texas, I had 40-50 pages of anecdotes from all around the country.

SC: So the guy putting his dick in the hole was true?

Clark: That happened in Fort Lauderdale, that happened at a swimming pool. He didn't put his dick through the hole, the peeping is what happened. The coach came in and caught him. The penis through the hole was my invention! Often I carried it to the extreme. PORKY'S itself is based on an episode we had at Key West. They didn't drop us into the water, but we didn't pay for girls so we were taken through a door, then there we were outside. There was a real Porky, and there was a Porky's. He was not at all like Porky in the movie. We used the name and Porky's — when we were high schoolers — was the hot joint. The name was cool and the dynamics of it were nice, but it's not Porky's in the movie. "Is Mike Hunt there?" — that happened at Hillsdale College in Michigan. I went to the local shack hangout, that's where that gag was pulled. The story of the boys who go to the everglades to meet the prostitute, then a guy with a machete chases them, sans clothes, out into the everglades, that's a real gag that had been going on since the '30s in Fort Lauderdale. They'd do it every ten years or so once the memory of it [faded].

Some women who criticized the film missed the point. It's not the women that are the butt of the jokes, it's the boys. They're always the ones caught naked, the women are always in control. The idea of PORKY'S was to tell the truth. The idea was to be as much like us as we were. Scorsese had just done RAGING BULL. I finished PORKY'S, the Ratings Board called me and said, *"Alright, Scorsese's movie's got 108 uses of 'fuck,' 'cunt,' the real terror words. We're gonna give you half!"* I had to follow that, so I took out about 50% of the language and I'm glad I did. I see some movies today where the "fucks" get laid on, and it's like alright, we get the idea. It feels pushed in for effect. Less is more, and the story and the people came through on PORKY'S. I wasn't trying to shock them, I didn't give a shit whether they got shocked or not, I just wanted it to be funny and relevant. Yeah, I knew a kid who woke up every morning, took out a ruler and measured his dick every day. He probably never said, *"It's shrinking,"* but that was funny, so why not? Ω

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SHARP RELIEF

by TAVIS RIKER

For our first-ever summer column, we crank up the AC, head *indoors* and crank out a cooled-down collection of Multimedia favors. You get anarchic rock from the Motor City, the richest musician alive, prog, funk, and The Black Windmill.

We start out strong with one of the best 'rockdocs' to come along in a long time, **MC5: A TRUE TESTIMONIAL**, a great tribute to one of the greatest punky/poppy/druggy bands to blast out of the midwest garage band scene of the late '60s. Director David C. Thomas spent almost a decade assembling this obvious labor of love detailing the rise and fall of the Motor City 5, including ultra-rare concert footage (some really amazing stuff here), and interviews with living and now-'passed-on' band members (lead singer Rob Tyner and guitarist Fred 'Sonic' Smith have gone to the big garage jam). The political agenda in the band (White Panther Party) made them prime surveillance targets of the FBI, and their commune-like co-habitation (think The Band meets The Weather Underground) is a fascinating subtext to the standard "party hearty" tales told by the band, their ex-spouses, et cetera. The still-standing members of the band have their hard luck tales to tell, but they are back on the road, with friends like Marshall Crenshaw and Mark Arm from Mudhoney to help out. If you can, catch this in a theatre with an audience (check the website **www.futurenowfilms.com** for details), preferably with a LOUD sound system, just to be reminded that these guys Kicked Out The Jams, Motherfuckers!

Moving up in years, but staying at '11' on the volume, Our favorite Swedish death metal monsters, **Opeth**, have returned with a live concert DVD, **LAMENTATIONS (Koch Records)**, filmed live in London last year on the "Damnation" tour. You actually get to see/hear the mellow side of leader Mikael Akerfeldt with the acoustic set that opens the show, with great versions of "Windowpane" and "Death Whispered." But when the acoustic guitars leave, the cookie monster descends with wicked renditions of "The Leper Affinity" and "Deliverance." There is also a documentary on the making of the two albums that they recorded prior to touring, quite illuminating and with great commentary from Mikael and producer Steven Wilson (quite a great bandleader himself with Porcupine Tree). So get your piercings, tattoos and other expressions of self-love/hate in gear and pick up the Metal DVD of the year.

From heavy to light we go with a vintage 1973 TV Special featuring the little-known **JAMES PAUL McCARTNEY**, made by the same production team that brought us the great **SAMMY** special, reviewed here at SR back in the 1920's. A classic moment as the 'Red Rose Speedway'-era **Wings** lineup gathers behind the curtain, kick into "Big Barn Bed" and the curtain rises — to a wall of TV monitors with 'audience' shots! Most of the show has Macca in variety-show mode, with a full orchestra joining the band for "My Love" and a particularly grisly Busby Berkeley-style number (think the worst of MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR). There are some pauses that refresh, tho, especially an amazing documentary segment when Paul and band go back to Liverpool and spend a day/night on the town "down the pub" with some of northern England's finest barcrawlers, including his dad! (Check the shot when Paul is embarrassed when caught swilling a drink!) We also get a tacky "Live and Let Die" with scratchy film clips from the then-new Bond vehicle. A striking short version of "Uncle Albert" (Very Mystery Tour...) is also a highlight. For fans of the richest fab, this presents Paul at his least pretentious and a splendid time is...yeah, you know.

Last time out we raved about Vitaphone music short films that we revived our laser player to screen. Well, we couldn't leave well enough alone and discovered another laser-only oddity, **CALL IT HOME: The House That Private Enterprise Built (Voyager)**, an exhaustive collection of short films, articles and cartoons that detail the origins of what we now call suburbia. From the post-depression Thirties, the massive movement towards uniformity in living spaces began, and then the good times following WWII sealed the deal. You get amazing clips from industrial films like "Homes for Veterans" (with a soldier looking at house plans while getting shelled in his foxhole! Well, an Ed Wood foxhole..); "Design For Dreaming", with a glamorous "housewife" running us through a Jetsons "home of the future" (With a STAR TREK-style automat kitchen!); and several Jam Handy-produced shorts like "The Mullinares", with Lawrence Welk-esque singalongs. The only downside is the aforementioned *clips* — we'd like the entire film on some of these winners. Compiled by Keller Easterling and Richard Prelinger, CALL IT HOME is nonetheless a *deep* exploration of the cultural shift that brought suburbia, shopping malls and subdivisions to life, captured with still frame accuracy (literally). Another laser winner!

Back to DVD we go with a pair of winning compilations from the dementos at **EyeTV** (demento is a good thing...). We head to Progville with a great **King Crimson** compilation That spans the years 1972-1984. The earlier clips with the Fripp/Wetton/Cross/Bruford lineup are short, so if your preference is this era, skip this comp. If you like solo Fripp, leading into "Discipline"-era Crimson, you're in for a treat. Our favorite is the segment from the short-lived ABC late-night comedy SNL-knockoff **FRIDAYS** where Crimson blew the house down with amazing versions of "Elephant Talk" and "Thela Hun Ginjeet." This is first-tier progressive rock music. From Progville we head over to Funktown for a **Sly and The Family Stone** compilation. It doesn't get more stanky than this, y'all. You get appearances on Don Kirschner (smoky), Dick Cavett (coke-y), and Mike Douglas (Twilight Zone). Just the outfits they wore on THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW alone make this a must-see. Oh, and you get "Dance to the Music," "Don't call me Nigger, Whitey" and "Stand," amongst many others. Sly seems to have disappeared into a basepipe over the past two decades, but when he and his band were in top form, they were tops.

Onward to the CD roundup, many great albums came our way this time around, but Shock readers will want to make a beeline to **Vigilante!: Roy Budd Cult Film Soundtracks 1971-1977 (Navarre-Sanctuary)**. Already established as a jazz bandleader in England, Roy Budd found a major niche in soundtrack work, specializing in crime thrillers like FEAR IS THE KEY (reviewed in the last SC), Bronson's THE STONE KILLER and particularly the great GET CARTER. Budd's wild combination of jazz arrangements, cool tablas and other exotic instruments, and macho Bond-like strings makes this collection a must-have for soundtrack freaks (although the ill-advised remixes fall flat here, like they usually do). The big surprise for us at SR was the mesmerizing cue "Free Tarrant" from the Michael Caine 1974 vehicle (Don Siegel's) THE BLACK WINDMILL.

It wouldn't be summer without some Brazilia and some Melancholic Pop (at least for us at SR), and we hit the jackpot with the beautiful Brazilian songs of **Bebel Gilberto**'s self-titled new album **(Six Degrees)**, and professional mopester **Perry Blake**'s new collection **"Songs For Someone" (Naïve)**, if you're looking for the sadness in the bright sunshine, make two purchases and your work is done. Lastly, we start a "summer update" section where new releases of note are brought to your attention. The hilarious third season of **TRAILER PARK BOYS (Showcase)** is just out on DVD, including the infamous Rush episode and the one and only (thank god) J-ROC as the "Microphone Assassin," yo.

Next time: Mothers and Magic Bands.

Thanks to: Andy Goldstein, Abe from Sony, Julius, Keith, and especially Liz.

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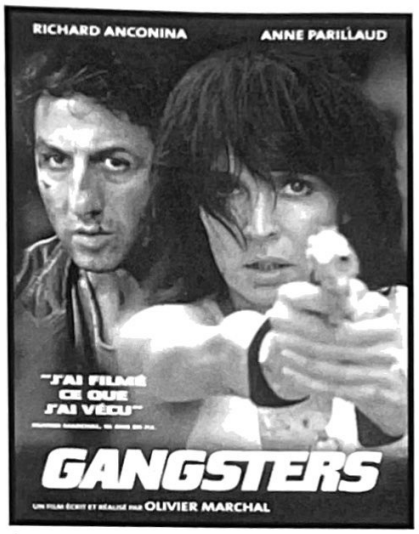
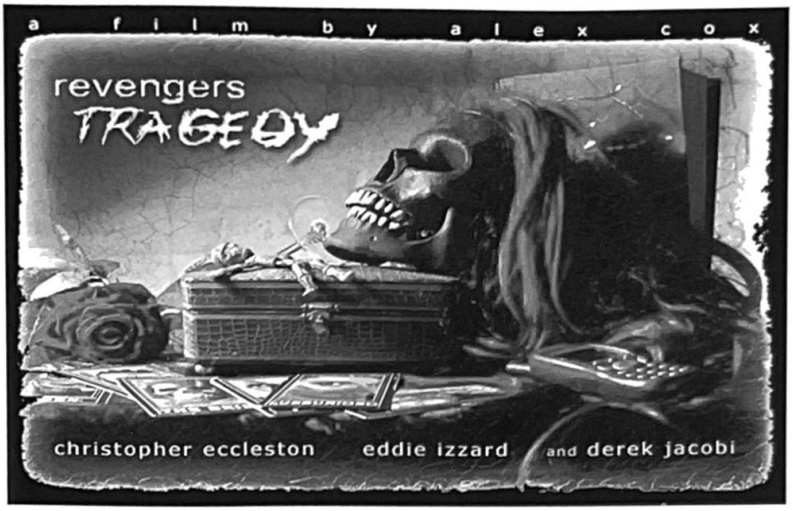


GANGSTERS (Video Search of Miami; 2002). Benefiting from a clever script and tightly-wound performances, this French cops-'n'-crooks thriller hooks the viewer in the opening minutes, as we're introduced to local hood Frankie Chaievski (top-billed Richard Anconina) and plunged into a 80 million franc diamond heist that leaves a pile of corpses in its wake. Soon Frankie, as well as his prostitute girlfriend Nina (LA FEMME NIKITA's Anne Parillaud), are hauled in and interrogated by the police, who are just as seedy and ruthless as the crooks — they snort coke, beat suspects, pressure lawyers, take midday coitus breaks, and will go to any extreme to retrieve the diamonds. It's a whole unit of Gallic Bad Lieutenants! Both Frankie and Nina are likably tough characters, and as they remain tight-lipped to these rogue cops, ex-cop-turned-actor-turned-writer/director Olivier Marchal sprinkles in flashbacks that uncover the *real* story behind the robbery, the missing gems, and several of these grizzled characters. There's even a little romance, since Frankie is more concerned about Nina's condition than his own problems. Best known in his homeland for supporting gigs in films like Maurice Pailat's POLICE and Alain Delon's LE BATTANT, Anconina brings a believable weariness to this longtime felon. Parillaud's role keeps her haggard, but she's still hot, and although Nina seems rather one-dimensional at first, she grows in intensity by the second half as her troubled past is unveiled. There's also good support from Gerald Laroche as the top cop Jansen, who's also the dirtiest of 'em all, and the film becomes increasingly tense, violent and cruel when Jansen goes totally psycho and abducts Nina, with Frank in hot pursuit. Though nothing too groundbreaking, GANGSTERS provides slight but intriguing amusement for any French crime cinema fan.

SAVE THE GREEN PLANET! [Jigureul Jikyeora!] (SuperHappyFun; 2003). From its rockin' opening cover of "Over the Rainbow" to its outlandishly risky finale, this gloriously unpredictable South Korean concoction from writer-director Jeong Jun-Hwan mixes an alien conspiracy, mental illness, a hostage drama, romantic misfits, twisted humor, and sudden shifts in tone. The ads made it look like a light-hearted, wacky comedy, but it's far, far from that. Byung Goo (Shin Ha-Gyun) is convinced that the Earth is being infiltrated by aliens from Andromeda, and aided by his equally addled girlfriend Sooni (Hwang Jeong-Min), plans to rid the planet of these dangerous space invaders. All signs point to Byung being a total nutjob, and his latest E.T.-in-disguise target is a wealthy CEO named Kang (Baek Yun-Shik). Armed with makeshift anti-alien inventions and journals packed with half-baked theories, he kidnaps Kang and whisks him to a rural mountain hideaway, where the businessman is stripped, shaved bald and tortured for days! Once we discover that Kang isn't the first "alien" that Byung has kept captive (the others were eventually fed to his scruffy little dog), the laughter quickly subsides. This guy isn't a harmless kook, after all; he's a demented mass murderer! Since Kang is also the chief-of-police's son-in-law, every available cop (most of them arrogant and stupid) is on the case, with one rebellious police detective coming close to the truth when he stops by Byung's remote home and stays the night. It would've been easy to portray Byung as a simple one-dimensional psycho, but amidst the growing tension, unflinching violence and delightfully offbeat humor the script also takes the time to expose the traumatic roots of his paranoid delusions. The end result is a unique and unsettling portrait of madness that's (by the end) even more screwed-up than its main character.

UNION SQUARE (2004). Back in the early-'90s, I lived six blocks from Union Square, a small NYC park surrounded by trendy restaurants and chain superstores. As this powerful (but highly depressing) new documentary explains, nowadays it's also the home base for several fucked-up young junkies, who gave director Stephen J. Szklarski an unsanitized peek into their lifestyle. They come from all walks of life, but now they live on the streets, panhandle with their hand-scrawled cardboard signs, and shoot up as soon as they can scrounge up enough cash. A half-dozen of these dope fiends are profiled, and when they aren't dragging themselves through their grim daily routine, they discuss their family backgrounds, how addiction destroyed their old lives, the art of begging, and overly-optimistic plans of someday getting clean (of course, that's unlikely when you're doing a half-dozen bags of H before noon). Ron talks about still being able to "pass" around straight folks, and is sick of the street life. The lone female in the bunch, Cheyenne, recalls how her young daughter was taken away from her (as if that weren't bad enough, she also has to coddle her whiny, "dead weight" subway-musician boyfriend). And whenever Stealth gets high, it inevitably leads to more ugly tattoos. Admittedly, after living in the East Village for eight years, I don't have much sympathy for squatters and beggars who happily leech off the rest of society in order to avoid a simple 9-to-5 job — but most of UNION SQUARE's people are fully aware of how they screwed up their lives by choosing heroin over loved ones, home or career, and now find themselves with nowhere to go. Even when they're full-blown assholes — such as when Danny steals from his own family in order to score — he concedes that it's wrong. We're also privy to endless scenes of shooting up in public bathrooms, empty stairwells, or wherever they can find a moment of privacy. Meanwhile, a slightly different insight is provided by an interview with a masked drug dealer, who explains that these types of white folks are his most reliable clientele. Szklarski deserves credit for allowing each subject's humanity to peek through, even if it's only for a moment, but the end result is still a tapestry of despair, filled with bad skin, track marks and few upbeat answers.

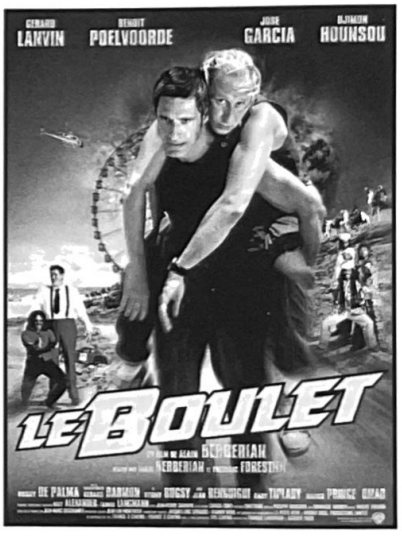
NOWHERE MAN (2004). Written, directed and photographed by Tim McCann (DESOLATION ANGELS), this low-budget indie is a nasty, pitch black dose of betrayal, revenge, obsession, and a dismembered member. When we first meet Conrad (Michael Rodrick), the guy is suffering through a difficult situation — his dick has been sliced off! Meanwhile, his ex-fiancee Jennifer (Debbie Rochon) is blackmailing him, keeping his severed penis on ice and dangling the slim hope of reattachment. Jennifer's trail soon leads Conrad into the world of low-rent porn, and in flashbacks we witness the events that led up to his currently castrated condition. The plot moves in unpredictable ways and is played relatively straight, but McCann also sneaks in a few sick laughs as Conrad searches for his missing johnson and is emasculated at every turn. Unlike most of her low-rent horror/sexploitation gigs, Rochon actually has an opportunity to *act* and is surprisingly effective, and although this Lorena Bobbit-wannabe initially seems somewhat one-dimensional, the role becomes richer and more sympathetic as we learn the whole truth. Conversely, Conrad is more and more of an irritating shithead, particularly once we learn that all of his current troubles grew from an inability to control his macho insecurities — with events long in the past suddenly causing him to brutally dump a loving, sexy fiancee. McCann wisely edits this slim story to a tight 71 minutes, while its compelling structure and credible lead performances keep us intrigued throughout. Also, look for an appearance by Troma's Lloyd Kaufman, who plays it serious in a small role as Conrad's physician.



REVENGERS TRAGEDY (SuperHappyFun; 2002). Alex Cox is no stranger to eccentric cinematic projects, but unlike his earlier oddities — such as STRAIGHT TO HELL or WALKER — which were equal parts passion and indulgence, REVENGERS is a more mature and focused vision, yet doesn't sacrifice any style or originality. Adapted from an early 17th-century revenge play by Thomas Middleton, the story has been transplanted into the near future, but the script by Frank Cottrell Boyce (BUTTERFLY KISS) retains the drama's original dialogue! In the year 2011, Liverpool is a ravaged city; at its worst, resembling a burnt-out industrial park ruled by roving street gangs, and at its most sumptuous, an Elton John Birthday Party. Christopher Eccleston (THE OTHERS) stars as nobleman Vindici, who returns to town to avenge the murder of his beloved bride, from years earlier. In fact, his entire wedding party had been poisoned and the culprit was a local crimelord known as the Duke (Derek Jacobi, sporting a white ponytail, bright red lipstick and rouge), whose current offspring are a rowdy, greedy, arrogant lot — one son has even been accused of raping the lovely Imogen (Sophie Dahl, Roald's granddaughter), daughter of Lord Antonio (Anthony Booth, father-in-law to British Prime Minister Tony Blair). Vindici eventually befriends the Duke's eldest boy Lussurioso (Eddie Izzard) and quickly pits these power-hungry family members against each other. Amidst delightfully devious plot twists, they're wiped out one by one, even as Vindici finds time to lug around the skull of his one true love (gosh, ain't that romantic?). All of the performers are dead-on perfect: Eccleston is commanding, Izzard charismatic, Jacobi is creepy as hell, and Cox even pops up for a drunken cameo. Aided by delirious production design and costumes, plus a dreamy soundtrack by Chumbawamba, this challenging mix of sly humor and bloodthirsty payback is one of Cox's most original and entertaining films.

2LDK (TLA Releasing; 2002). Anyone who has ever dealt with an annoying roommate will find plenty to enjoy in this slight but exceptionally nightmarish Japanese comedy from Yukihiko Tsutsumi. Originally conceived as a cinematic "duel" between himself and VERSUS-director Ryuhei Kitamura (who, in turn, created ARAGAMI), this two-character tale takes place entirely inside a Tokyo 2LDK apartment (2 bedrooms, plus Living room, Dining room, Kitchen) which is shared by a pair of struggling actresses. Nozomi (Koike Eiko) is a young control freak, Lana (Nonami Maho) is a slightly older rich snob, and they're constantly getting on each other's nerves. Sure, they're outwardly polite to each other, but the viewer is also privy to all of the snotty remarks running through each woman's head. Making their situation even more tense is the fact that they've both auditioned for the same role. Soon one little misunderstanding leads to increasingly vindictive and destructive behavior, which escalates from wrecking the other's possessions to physical abuse — and just wait until they get their hands on a chainsaw! They weren't the sanest chicks to begin with, but once pushed over the edge, there's no predicting the outcome, as the pair spends the final half-hour beating the bejesus out of each other and destroying the entire apartment in the process. Good lord, these gals are violent, and Tsutsumi knows how to make their actions look genuinely painful. Both actresses are superb as these mean-spirited, intolerant basketcases, with outstanding production design adding to its visual appeal. Meanwhile, Tsutsumi pares this explosive scenario down to a brisk 70 minutes — anything more would've been overkill — with one final, excellent joke tossed in for good measure.

GOZU [Gokudo Kyofu Dai-Gekijo] (SuperHappyFun; 2003). Yes, it's another Yakuza-themed feature from the insanely prodigious Takashi Miike, but this brutal, hilarious and wildly unpredictable outing is closer in spirit to the outrageous HAPPINESS OF THE KATAKURIS than the more subdued AGITATOR. Written by Sakichi Sato (who adapted ICHI THE KILLER), it boasts a creepy, unsettling comic tone — almost as if Scorsese's AFTER HOURS was saddled with the deranged internal logic of Lynch's LOST HIGHWAY. Hideki Sone stars as Minami, a novice (and somewhat inept) Yakuza, who's assigned to drive his paranoid hot-headed boss Ozaki (the DEAD OR ALIVE trilogy's Sho Aikawa) to remote Nagoya in his Ford Mustang convertible. But poor Minami encounters one obstacle after another in this cryptic town, beginning with the disappearance of his comatose employer and a hotel that makes the Bates' place look warm and inviting. There's also a lactating innkeeper, jabbering ghosts, a cow-headed intruder, Yakuza skins hung like dry cleaning, plus some unexplainable cue cards. The film's first half is certainly odd and intriguing, but the remainder is gloriously out of its gourd, particularly when Minami is reunited with Ozaki, who's gone through some radical changes (and is now played by WIZARD OF DARKNESS star Kimika Yoshino), which leads to emotional confusion, gender-bending eroticism and a finale awash in squirm-inducing imagery. From its opening canine pummeling to its crime boss with a ladle shoved deep up his ass, GOZU is one of Miike's most stunning works.



BALL AND CHAIN [Le Boulet] (Video Search of Miami; 2002). After suffering through one too many overblown, big-budget US action-comedies, I began to think American filmmakers had a monopoly on shitty, braindead movies. Leave it to the French to prove me wrong, with a feature so misguided, obnoxious and illogical that I'd be surprised if Jerry Bruckheimer hasn't already purchased the remake rights. Gérard Lanvin stars as Moltes, a vicious crime boss who's spent seven years behind bars for murder. Beak-nosed Benoit Poelvoorde (MAN BITES DOG) is his goofy prison guard Reggio, who displays all of the raw, unfettered machismo of Don Knotts. Reggio regularly purchases a lottery ticket for Moltes, and just when this convict hits the jackpot, Reggio's ugly wife skips off to Africa to follow the Desert Rally, while wimpy hubbie attempts suicide (the film would've improved tenfold if he'd succeeded). Thinking Reggio has stolen his winning ticket, Moltes breaks out of prison, with cops (led by recent Oscar-nominee Djimon Hounsou) and a vengeful colleague named the Turk after him. Meanwhile, this no-nonsense killer and the hypochondriac-geek-who-won't-shut-up — a 5th rate, 21st century Martin & Lewis — continue their odd couple comedy-of-errors on the Dark Continent, with cartoonish obstacles such as desert nomads, camels and a gigantic thug with metal teeth (a painful rip-off of Richard Kiel's Jaws). Early on, one amazing sequence (a beautifully choreographed ferris wheel stunt) momentarily raised my hopes, but nothing else in the movie comes close. Instead, directors Alain Berberian and Frédéric Forestier don't seem to have any consistent agenda — one minute there's sadistic violence (a guy is tortured by having piranhas gnaw off his fingers), the next it's grating farce (Moltes and Reggio dressing in *blackface* to exit the country). Lanvin makes the strongest impression as the least buffoonish character, while Reggio is such a bumbling idiot that you'll want to shove his face into a wood chipper. With passable photography by Jean-Pierre Sauvaire (TAXI), this is colorful, fast-paced rubbish that overflows with bullets, corpses and explosions, but lacks even one working brain cell.

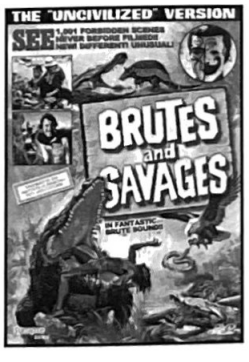
DVDementia

One of David Cronenberg's most obscure, atypical directorial efforts is the 1978 drag racing drama **FAST COMPANY**, which makes its DVD debut courtesy of **Blue Underground**. Equipped with his first million-dollar budget and starring a trio of drive-in heavyweights — William Smith, John Saxon and the lovely Claudia Jennings — Cronenberg brought his love of automobiles and racing to the screen, long before CRASH twisted these topics into a sexual fetish. In a refreshing change of pace from his usual villain roles, Smith plays good guy Lonnie "Lucky Man" Johnson, the king of the local dragsters. Meanwhile, Jennings pops up as Lonnie's "old lady" and Saxon is the lowlife head of an oil company sponsor who puts the screws to Lonnie — even going as far as murder. Sure, the story is pure B-movie schlock, but Cronenberg keeps the pace brisk and the macho dreck to a minimum, He also does a brilliant job of capturing this minor-league drag racing lifestyle, aided by Mark Irwin's verité camerawork (which even takes us inside the cramped cars, for a driver's POV) and appealing performances. The disc also includes a recent interview with longtime Cronenberg-cinematographer Irwin, plus Smith and Saxon rambling about their character-actor careers. There's even an audio commentary by Cronenberg, who admits he hadn't seen the film in 25 years, but displays an obvious affection for the flick while discussing its western themes, grafting documentary elements onto the original script, and humorously referring to a gratuitous topless scene as "a great moment in the history of cinema."

Abel Ferrara's 1979 sleaze 'n' slaughter fest **THE DRILLER KILLER (Cult Epics)** gets the double-disc treatment, with a beautiful print, plenty of seedy NYC backdrops, and loads of cool extras. Using the pseudonym Jimmy Laine, Abel stars as tortured artist Reno Miller, who's frustrated by his lack of success, pissed-off by a noisy band who moves in upstairs, and takes out his rage by ventilating Union Square winos and bums with his handy cordless power drill! The pace picks up in the 2nd half, once Reno goes totally nuts, but the film sounds better than it actually is. Disc One includes an (often incoherent) audio commentary by Abel, that's more amusing than the actual movie (which I find grating, monotonous and overlong). He's ready with self-deprecating wisecracks, comments about actresses he was hot for, gets overly excited at the bloody murders, and laughs that some of his ultra-dark sequences "went over big at the drive-in." Disc Two contains a trailer for Ferrara's '76 hardcore flick 9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY, plus a trio of his early shorts. The 6-minute, silent NICKY'S FILM (1971) is incomprehensible; THE HOLD-UP (1972) is slightly more accomplished (hey, it has sound!) but is still pretty rough, with laid-off blue-collar schmucks planning a robbery; and the best of the lot is the half-hour COULD THIS BE LOVE (1973), a rambling story of a female artist and a local hooker who's hired to pose for her, which eventually leads to an uptight Greenwich cocktail party and unpredictable twists. Ferrara-fanatics will also get a good laugh out of Abel's 9-minute-long commentary about that short's lead actress, Nadia Von Loewenstein, dishing all the dirt about their screwed-up, off-screen relationship.

Presented on DVD by Joe Bob Briggs, **THE DOUBLE-D AVENGER (Elite)** is a big-busted, no-budget, dumb-as-shit action-comedy from writer-director William Winckler, featuring big-tit starlets from the '60s and '70s hired for grand-milf camp value. Russ Meyer knocker-queen Kitten Natividad stars as nightclub-owner Chastity Knott, who's diagnosed with breast cancer (by physician Raven de la Croix), heads to South America, meets an Amazon tribe, and acquires super powers. But a competing strip-club sleazebag orders his trio of lap dancers (including FASTER PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!-icon Haji) to kill Chastity, who's now squeezing into a shoddy superhero costume, spinning like Wonder Woman, and bashing villains with her enormous, aged breasts. There's plenty of cleavage, but no actual nudity (except for some old Kitten pin-ups, during a dream sequence), and Forry Ackerman makes a pathetic cameo in the Movieland Wax Museum. DVD extras include a 77-minute making-of feature that's packed with info and interviews chronicling the creation of this insufferably crappy movie, while Joe Bob's audio commentary is the only decent thing on the entire disc, so skip watching the movie and go straight to his hilarious insights. Referring to it as "Attack of the Slutty Grandmas," he rips into its horrible soundtrack, lousy acting, cut-rate production values, lethargic pace, continuity errors, and overall wrongheaded agenda. Joe Bob should be embarrassed to have his face on this godawful waste-of-time's cover, but everyone has to pay the rent, I guess.

Completed in 1977, but not released to US grindhouses until '82, **BRUTES AND SAVAGES (Synapse)** makes its DVD debut with a 107-minute print (dubbed "the uncivilized version") that's 15 minutes longer than any previous domestic release. Unfortunately, it's still a crock of dull, tawdry and obviously-faked Mondo-era malarkey. Right off the bat, this "factual report" promises a shocking glimpse into the planet's most untamed niches, as we follow the Arthur Davis expedition. Foppish Davis wanders through the film in his safari hat and orange leisure suit, and his first stop is Africa (or what they *claim* is Africa — my money is on Southern California), to capture a tribe's mating rituals, day-long orgies and a hilariously-phony croc attack! Then it's onto the interior of South America, for primitive villages, poverty, harvesting coca plants, erotic pottery, plus a llama love-in! And in case viewers get bored by all of the ponderous native customs, shock value is provided by an array of butchered animals (turtle, goat, jaguar), as well as a lame excuse for human cranial brain surgery footage, when a villager suffers from a concussion and is hauled to a modern hospital! There's also an inappropriately groovy Riz Ortolani score, while Richard Johnson's narration gives the only smidgen of class to this lurid, vacuous, culturally-insensitive claptrap. The disc includes liner notes by SC-contributor Chris Poggiali, a trailer, plus excerpts from Davis' journal, which was published as a cross-promotion for the movie.

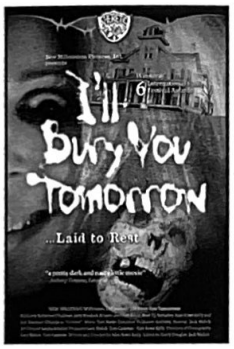


Assembled by acclaimed PBS documentary filmmaker Wayne Ewing, **BREAKFAST WITH HUNTER (www.breakfastwithhunter.com)** is an entertainingly gonzo 90-minute profile of his longtime friend and Aspen neighbor Hunter S. Thompson. Ewing follows this "literary maverick" through various hilarious encounters and public appearances, and it often feels like we're eavesdropping on Thompson's home movies. There's a visit to The Viper Room (with Johnny Depp and John Cusack participating in a reading), standing up to the Aspen pigs on a trumped-up DUI charge (along with clips from his 1970 campaign for sheriff), a 1996 Louisville tribute, and *Rolling Stone*'s 25th anniversary celebration of FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (with HST taking a fire extinguisher to Jann Wenner's spiffy office!). Of course, Thompson also hangs out at his Owl Farm home, with Ralph Steadman making an appearance, plus we get to watch Hunter blow his stack during a meeting with Alex Cox, concerning his wrongheaded vision of LAS VEGAS. Even though a cocktail is perpetually clutched in his hand, Hunter is mostly cogent and coherent throughout — from a hotel room with Benicio Del Toro and shooting guns with Depp, to filming his F&L cameo for replacement-director Terry Gilliam. There isn't much new insight to be found here, but it's still one hell of a trip. The DVD also includes a fragmented commentary (begun by HST, but when he leaves part way through, is concluded by Ewing); English subtitles for viewers unfamiliar with Hunter's "low guttural mumbling"; Warren Zevon and Thompson collaborating on a song; a conversation with P.J. O'Rourke; plus footage of Hunter working with his editors. It's an incredible package, and a must-have for any self-respecting Thompson fan!

Released on the coattails of BLAIR WITCH, but actually conceived long beforehand, the DVD of Ron Bonk's 'found footage' indie **RED FILE 66-095: STRAWBERRY ESTATES (Sub Rosa; www.b-movie.com)** is an amazing, extra-filled package. Here's the set up: a pompous professor leads a small expedition to a haunted, long-shuttered hospital called Strawberry Estates. Days later, the group disappears and only the footage captured by their videographer remains. Although I never found any of this particularly convincing, it's still quite an accomplishment for only a four-day shoot, and Bonk wisely avoids cheap fright effects in favor of building tension, particularly in the second half. The performances are hit and miss, with solid work from Chrissy Frick as the prof's intern and Jason Reed as their camera-

man, even as the other characters threaten to shatter the mood with painful over-emoting (the grating professor) or inexperience (a psychic chick hooked into the place's paranormal energy). Despite some extremely talkative segments, it's an ingeniously crafted exercise in suspense. In addition to an informative (and surprisingly self-critical) director's commentary, the disc contains a quartet of other 'Red File' featurettes; a clever faux-behind-the-scenes short which incorporates 1997 footage from Bonk's first, abandoned stab at the movie with Tina Krause and Debbie Rochon; trailers for both versions; plus (for slower viewers who never realized it was all fictional) a well-hidden look into the reality of the project.

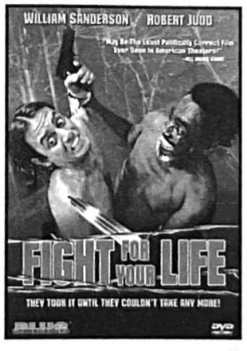
In the mood for two-hours of madness, murder, necrophilia, body snatching, and deliciously demented characters? Proceed directly to writer-director Alan Rowe Kelly's **I'LL BURY YOU TOMORROW (www.hereticfilms.com)**, a kick-ass mortuary psychodrama that overflows with dirty small town secrets and a sleazy veneer that harkens back to twisted '70s fare such as Paul Bartel's PRIVATE PARTS. In the quiet town of Port Oram, a mom-'n'-pop funeral home hires area-newcomer Dolores (Zoë Daelman Chlanda) as an assistant embalmer, and even as the viewer is clued in to Dolores' potential instability (there's definitely something nasty in her trunk), her bosses — the Beechs — embrace her like the daughter they lost years earlier. Meanwhile, the Beech's employees, greaseball driver Jake (Jerry Murdock) and gender-ambiguous Corey (Kelly), are supplementing their income by selling fresh body parts from the Beech's dearly departed clientele. Kelly skillfully interweaves the various story threads, maintains a seedy ambiance and builds to a ballsy climax, while Chlanda gives a gutsy, captivating performance as a pill-popping, death-obsessed cutie with a traumatic past and a fly-ridden corpse in her bed. It's a deranged dose of gothic horror filled enthusiastic performances and macabre delights. The DVD also includes trailers, deleted scenes and 10-minutes worth of bloopers.



It's been over 25 years since Don Dohler stumbled onto the horror/sci-fi scene with THE ALIEN FACTOR. Well, he's back with a Maryland-lensed, 2001 sequel **ALIEN FACTOR 2: ALIEN RAMPAGE (www.retromedia.org)**, which follows in the original's cheese-drenched, dimestore shoes. A peaceful small town (a/k/a "redneck hell") is suddenly at the center of an extraterrestrial shitstorm, complete with a downed spaceship, a lumpy-faced female alien, stolen uranium, and federal agents in pursuit. The creature is eventually wounded, the area is surrounded by a deadly electrical force field, and a rubbery monster (referred to as a "cyborg") begins to kill off the dumb-as-shit townsfolk. Meanwhile, the human characters include a tough female sheriff (Donna Sherman), a confused out-of-town couple, plus longtime-Dohler-veteran George Stover as deputy Mickey. Along the way, Dohler earns points for his ambitious, old-school special effects and make-up, but modern audiences will undoubtedly consider the film lightweight in terms of gore and cheap thrills. Sure, there's plenty of action during the finale, but this 74-minute flick still drags in several spots and makes old AIP creature features look extravagant. It's a vaguely amusing throwback to cut-rate sci-fi cinema that used to pop up on The Late Late Show during the '70s. and will probably be best appreciated by Dohler's family and friends. The DVD also contains a trailer, stills (including Stover's personal gallery) and five-minutes worth of outtakes.

From the brutal murders in its opening minutes to its deliriously over-the-top finale, director Shugo Fujii's **LIVING HELL [Iki-Jikogu] (Subversive Cinema)** is an unrelenting descent into madness, torture and the strength of family ties. A Japanese family graciously invites an elderly relative to move into their house, unaware that this seemingly-senile, 70-year-old woman is an escaped mental patient who was also the lone survivor of a savage murder scene. She arrives with her equally-strange, near-catatonic granddaughter/caretaker, and wheelchair-bound son Yasu (BATTLE ROYALE's Hirohito Honda) immediately suspects something is amiss with these bizarre houseguests. Unfortunately, the rest of his family ignores his worries and leaves the crippled kid home alone with these oddballs. That's when the grisly fun begins, as Yasu is repeatedly terrorized by the pair, complete with stun gun torture, tooth extraction, bug and eyeball eating, and much more. Meanwhile, a reporter uncovers a trail of evil that leads straight to Yasu's doorstep. Admittedly, this isn't the most sophisticated concept, but it's good for plenty of gleefully sadistic thrills and hysterical hallucinations, with Fujii pulling no punches as Yasu spirals into an emotional meltdown. It's a powerful little film, steeped in black humor, eerie visuals and gleeful dementia. The disc includes four equally-trippy shorts by Shugo (BLACKHOLE, SEESAW GAME, GRIEF, and DEAD MONEY), deleted scenes, over 200 storyboards, and an English language director's commentary.

One of the most explosive, offensive, politically incorrect exploitation-revenge films ever made is 1977's **FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE (Blue Underground)** and, no surprise, it's also one of my favorites. So I was elated to see it finally arrive on DVD, with a gorgeous, uncut, widescreen print, so everyone can now be left slack-jawed by this brutal grindhouse masterpiece from director Robert Endelson. William Sanderson (HBO's DEADWOOD) leads a trio of killers who escape from NYC cops, snatch a pimpmobile, head upstate, and eventually take a black middle-class family hostage in their home. Sanderson is a revelation as psychopath Jesse Lee Kane — one of the most despicable characters ever committed to celluloid — as he kills without mercy, piles on the racial slurs (referring to his captives as "Monkey Face" or "Martin Luther Coon"), forces the preacher/father (Robert Judd) to tap dance, and even pulls a gun on a baby! It's like watching one of the DELIVERANCE hillbillies in a DESPERATE HOURS scenario! Meanwhile, the abused and humiliated family (including a feisty crippled grandma, and a young son played by Reggie Bythewood, who went onto direct 2003's BIKER BOYZ) tries to escape and finally gets even with these assholes during a rousing climax. In addition to stills, posters and separate trailers aimed at "white" and "black" audiences, there's a commentary by writer Straw Weisman, cinematographer Lloyd Freidus and BU's Bill Lustig, who first saw the film on 42nd Street (while on a date!) and obviously adores the movie. They offer insights on its production, its inflammatory racial content, troubles marketing the picture, and the reaction from Times Square auds.



The title says it all. **THE SUBJECT IS SEX (Other Cinema)** is a funny, salacious and often groovy compilation of cinematic erotica, from the silent-era into the '80s. There's a little something for everybody here — softcore, hardcore, animation, the kitsch and the crass — so if one tawdry tidbit doesn't earn a laugh or stiffen your wick, there's plenty more to choose from. We get a few raunchy '70s sexploitation trailers, old TV-commercials for Jade East men's cologne and VD prevention; a '40s US Navy training film on how to give an enema; plus striptease legend Lili St. Cyr takes a bubble bath and Sally Rand performs her Bubble Dance. But the most demented fun comes from its vintage shorts from the '20s and '30s. In RATMAN, a naked woman spots a rodent and a lascivious stranger comes to her rescue; a new-fangled TV-set picks up naked women in UNCLE SI AND THE SIRENS; and the animated BURIED TREASURE (starring "Eveready Harton") features nymphomaniacs, bestiality and dueling penises. One of the oddest oldies is ON THE BEACH, in which a trio of skinny-dipping gals have their clothes held for ransom by a voyeur, who demands sex in return, but they trick him into screwing a *goat* instead! There's also a "Beefcakes and Cheesecakes" compilation that has nude guys on pogo-sticks, topless female dancing and — in the most gruesome fetish moment of all time — one sick chick masturbating to Nixon! Also from Other Cinema: **EXPERIMENTS IN TERROR**, a mixed-bag of experimental, underground and exploitation shorts. Its more abstract, non-narrative entries are tiresome, and Damon Packard's sci-fi/horror hodgepodge DAWN OF AN EVIL MILLENNIUM (1988) is dementedly amateurish, but a highlight is Lloyd Michael Williams' URSULA (1961), in which a girl is emotionally damaged by her sadistic mother, resulting in spooky nightmares and bloodshed. There's also a nine-minute snippet from J.X. Williams' hallucinatory THE VIRGIN SACRIFICE (1969), with a mute young woman learning that her roommates are devil worshippers ("it's the 'in' thing to do"). Ironically, amidst all of these indie filmmakers struggling to create their 'art,' the most entertaining tidbit is a 1973 American Dental Association short, THE HAUNTED MOUTH, with Cesar Romero as the voice of Plaque.

UNDER GROUND ODDITIES

DARK SPIRAL (1999) [Lightmasters Entertainment, P.O. Box 2883, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546; www.lightmasters.net; $25 postpaid]. Writer-director Metrov's blunt but engaging indie feature stars Alex Demir as Johnny, a recently-retired mob hitman with more attitude than brains. One night he gets royally fucked up on some new designer drug — which leaves one chick O.D.'ed on his apartment floor, and undercover cops ready to haul him and his gay lover Joey (Ricky Dean Logan) to jail. Plus an assassin known as 'the fakir' has been hired to off Johnny. This is going to be one long, tense night, and Metrov constructs a tightly-wound drama, spiced with clever twists and unexpected humor (much of it coming from Johnny's seemingly unlimited supply of piss-poor luck). Most of the film takes place inside this one apartment — with Johnny, Joey and three cops (including MODELS INC.'s Stephanie Romanov for a little feminine sex appeal) — as Aaron Cunningham's stark b&w photography keeps their conflict riveting, along with edgy performances and crisp dialogue. The quartet shoots the shit, busts each other's balls, discloses secrets, and even finds time for a bit of screwing. Will Johnny turn stool pigeon to save his ass? Is one of these characters actually the deadly 'the fakir'? Plus who'll dispose of that damned corpse in the bathtub? Their situation eventually spins out of control, with paranoia, blackmail, murder, loads of Ferrara-style emotional turmoil, plus an ending filled with so many double crosses that it reaches gloriously absurd heights.

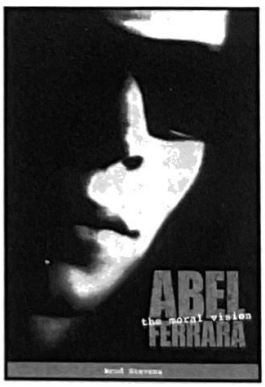
CRUEL TO BE KIND (2004) [Nocturnal Vaudeville, P.O. Box 52, Short Hills, NJ 07078; www.crueltobekindmovie.com]. This 12-minute short from writer-director-star Jesse Kaye is a simple but darkly amusing glimpse into marital tensions and one couple's unique balance of power. Lonnie (Kaye) is having one miserable morning: his shrill wife Jennifer (Melanie Canter) barges in while he's trying to take a relaxing dump and then harangues him for being insensitive, so to blow off steam, lay-about Lonnie takes his T-Bird for a spin, only to have the car die out on the road. Without any cash or credit cards, he's stuck in the middle of New Jersey, and is forced to make his way back by foot and (even more depressing) by *bus* — but just wait until he gets home! Any filmmaker who'll cast himself in a role that has him sitting naked on a toilet, trying to shit, obviously has confidence to burn, but Kaye also displays plenty of skill behind the camera. The film is beautifully crafted and edited, with authentic NJ backdrops (you can almost smell the place), an effective score, as well as a keen understanding of how relationships — even at their most twisted — deal with life's 'little' problems and endure.

I HATE YOU (2004) [Blackcloud Pictures, 749 Beck Street 1B, Bronx, NY 10455; www.blackcloudpictures.com]. Director/co-writer Nick Oddo makes his feature debut with a gritty vision of one man's warped idea of success. Marvin W. Schwartz (who co-wrote the film) stars as Norman, a wannabe stand-up comic who's also juggling another occupation: serial killer! And while his jokes might suck, this unassuming old guy is terrific at stabbing strangers to death. Norman's a vicious little fucker, who hears the cheers of the crowd after each murder and is motivated by a desire for fame — whether it's on-stage at a local comedy club or in the newspapers, when one of his crimes is reported. In his spare time, he also discusses the concept of murder with an old friend. Norman is a terrifically unstable character — a Rupert Pupkin offshoot — and while his situation isn't always believable (i.e. killing people in broad daylight on a busy NYC street), the film is less about realism than society's preoccupation with cold-blooded violence, which is now the quickest, most dependable route to fame. At the center of it all, Schwartz has the screen presence of a classic character actor, as well as a wonderfully vicious, unpredictable edge. Oddo's b&w photography is blunt yet effective, but even at only 72 minutes, this black comedy runs on too long, without many revelations. Meanwhile, the film's most painful moments are its deadening stand-up routines; honestly, if I was ever forced to sit through comedians this inept and untalented, I'm sure I'd end up murdering someone too.

Shocking Books

CREEPING FLESH: THE HORROR FANTASY FILM BOOK, Vol. 1 edited by David Kerekes **(Headpress; www.headpress.com; $17.95).** Exploring some of the most obscure and beloved niches of UK horror, on both the big and small screen, this amazing 160-page softcover is the first in a projected series — and a terrific start! It begins on a strong note with Phil Tonge's history of BBC horror — from Quatermass to the ultra-creepy A GHOST STORY FOR CHRISTMAS — complete with detailed synopses and critiques, in addition to other notable TV-efforts such as THE YEAR OF THE SEX OLYMPICS and GHOST-WATCH. There are additional essays on shows like HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR and Steve Coogan's DR. TERRIBLE'S HOUSE OF HORRIBLE; Martin Jones' fascinating chronicle of Paul Morrissey's troubled THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES; interviews with Ray Brady (BOY MEETS GIRL) and Alan Birkinshaw (KILLER'S MOON), plus obscure topics such as Saxon Logan's SLEEPWALKER, David Pinner's novel *Rituals* (the uncredited model for THE WICKER MAN) and an excellent (but somewhat out-of-place) Q&A with SLEAZOID EXPRESS' Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford. Sad to report, many of these terror treats are unavailable on any format in England (with only fond memories keeping them alive), while US fans will need to shell out for an all-region DVD player and open an Amazon.co.uk account. Sprinkled with lively contributions from Julian Upton, David Kerekes and Darrell Buxton, it's highly recommended!

ABEL FERRARA: THE MORAL VISION by Brad Stevens **(FAB Press; www.fabpress.com; $26.95).** No simple, fawning filmmaker tribute, this dense, 368-page volume tries to dissect Abel Ferrara's life of (self-described) "orchestrated chaos," from cult hits (MS. 45) and breakout successes (THE KING OF NEW YORK), to his most eclectic projects. Stevens has a deep respect and understanding of Abel's films (hell, he even considers Ferrara's early porn-flick 9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY a "difficult but rewarding work"), and offers lengthy analysis of every title in Ferrara's often-rocky filmography; uncovering their deeper meanings — from themes of redemption and sexual politics to his ability to "deform and destroy" narrative structure. Although I didn't always agree with Stevens' opinions — like his assertion that NEW ROSE HOTEL is one of Abel's masterpieces — he puts up a persuasive argument. Stevens also collects insightful and humorous anecdotes from Abel's colleagues, loads of terrific b&w/color photos, a detailed filmography (such as a breakdown of his 229-minute work print of SNAKE EYES a/k/a DANGEROUS MOVES), and a section devoted to Abel's tantalizing, unrealized projects. It's a solid piece of work, as uncompromising as Ferrara's own films.



NEVER COMING TO A THEATRE NEAR YOU: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO UNDERGROUND MOVIES ON VIDEO AND DVD by Phil Hall **(Michael Wiese Productions; www.mwp.com).** There are a lot of books currently out there revolving around obscure cinema, but Phil Hall quickly proves that his goal is far more illuminating and engrossing than most, as he takes us on a voyage into the wild world of underground cinema (which deserves all of the support it can get). Hall highlights titles like John Farrell's RICHARD THE SECOND, Jeremiah Kipp's THE CHRISTMAS PARTY and Shanti Guy's TEXAS NIGHT TRAIN, while uncovering the coolest new underground comedies, sleaze, documentaries, and threadbare projects that boast more brains and imagination than any recent Hollywood swill. This 268-page book also contains several enlightening interviews (i.e. Ron Bonk, founder of Sub Rosa Studios, a prime purveyor of no-budget horror), plus chapters focusing on underground film festivals, indie cinema's distribution headaches and on-line future, bootleg film distribution (including a Q&A with Shocking Videos' import-guru Mark Johnston), and helpful hints for aspiring DIY-ers. Hall's writing has an ingratiating style, sprinkled with amusing insights that could only come from someone who truly loves and appreciates bizarre, original cinema. It's an essential acquisition for any self-respecting film fanatic!

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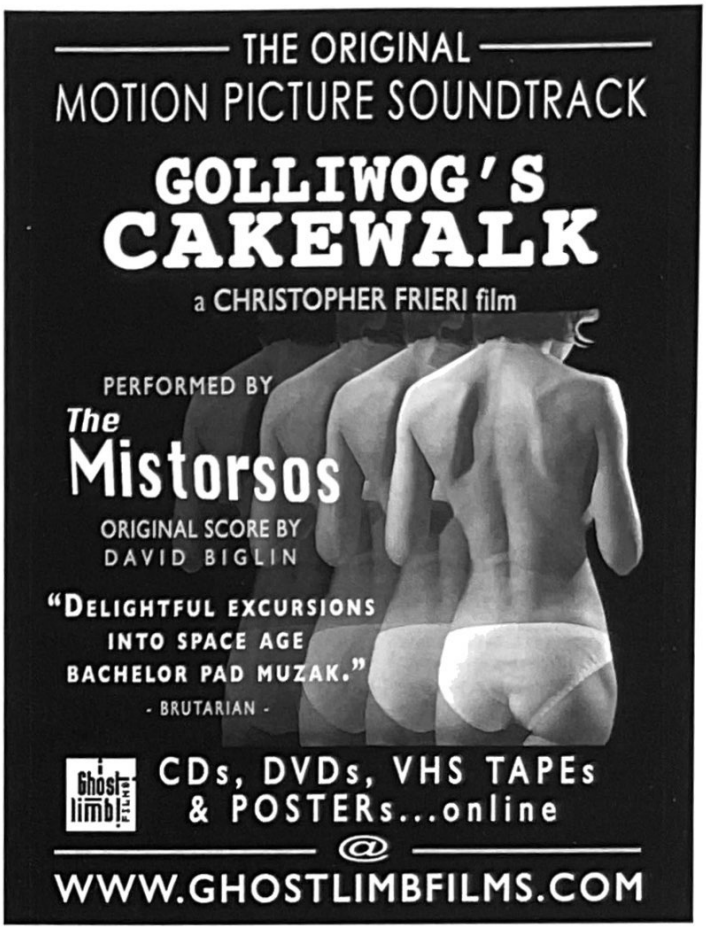

BRAD DOURIF Continued from PAGE 34

SC: What's the best one you've done?
Dourif: DEADWOOD. The one I'm doing now.

SC: For those of us who are HBO-deprived, tell us about your character.
Dourif: I play a doctor who's into science but who's been traumatized by the Civil War. A lot of doctors were. They didn't understand about how infections were spread. They were cutting off people's legs because of gangrene and they didn't realize they were spreading gangrene by using the same instruments over and over. You can actually see pictures of these piles of legs. It's shot on a ranch in Los Angeles about twenty minutes from where I live, which is great.

SC: You've done other Western parts, like GRIM PRAIRIE TALES (1990).
Dourif: James Earl Jones was really amazing to work with. You think of him of him having this dignified air, but when you get to know him he has this really earthy sense of humor. Always joking, this wild sense of humor, very funny. At one point he took out a gun and started shooting at a cactus. I did not know he was going to do that, and I was just amazed, and I said to myself, "I don't know where that came from, but I'm gonna watch, I wanna see more!"

SC: Do you have any particular affinity for Western roles?
Dourif: It depends on what it is. It doesn't matter what the genre is. You might not like a certain genre but then you get a script that changes your mind. It's like, I used to hate the Blues. Just hated that type of music. Then I saw the Paul Butterfield Blues Band play, and I thought, "This is great."

SC: I also hear rumors of a new CHILD'S PLAY sequel.
Dourif: SEED OF CHUCKY. That's finished. I like doing Chucky. It's easy. I go in and read the part all the way through and they match the doll, the puppet, to my voice. They keep doing it until it fits in with the way the voice is.

SC: Are there more Chucky movies planned for the future?
Dourif: As long as they keep making money, they'll keep makin' them. Chucky may not be something I'm swelled up with pride about, but they pay me and it's good work.

SC: And there was a sort of vampire movie you did recently?
Dourif: VLAD, that's finished too. And I start the second season of DEADWOOD in July. I didn't want to do it at first because I knew HBO didn't pay very much. But my girlfriend thought I should do it, because HBO is pretty much all she watches. And it's a good thing I changed my mind. It's the best thing happening in film or TV right now. Ω

ROSANNE KATON Continued from PAGE 31

that much to clear that up. (laughs) Not only are we working with NASA, which is really fantastic, but we're using some technology that can find water. Lack of water kills more people than land mines. The other thing is, we found about 200 items that had been created for the space shuttle that can save lives in refugee camps, and no one had ever gone to NASA before from the relief community and asked, "What do you have?" I mean, we went to NASA before the military did! (laughs) While they were building longer sticks to poke for land mines, we were working with NASA and using satellites to find plastic land mines, which are hard to find with metal detectors. We're not removing the mines as quickly as I would like. What I'd really like to do is, just for a couple of million dollars — which in terms of international relief is really not a lot of money — we could retool the factories that make these cheap land mines. They'd much rather make something else. That would raise the price of every land mine, and they'd use fewer land mines.

SC: Before we go, are there any other movie stories you'd like to share with our readers?
Katon-Walden: There are some crazy situations I can tell you about — like going into war zones and seeing EBONY, IVORY & JADE on television, looped into yet another language. Or going to see THE THIN BLUE LINE and just staring dumbstruck at the screen as THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS suddenly becomes a part of an actual murder case. (laughs) Or sitting in Cambodia getting grilled by the Khmer Rouge — *"What do you do?"* "Uh, well...I was in THE MUTHERS!"

SC: How would you sum up your experiences in front of the camera?
Katon-Walden: When it comes to my film work, it was always much more interesting to do the work than the product ever was to watch. After I did the work, I knew the product wasn't going to be anything earth-shattering, so I just went on to the next adventure. I really enjoyed the times I was acting, though, and I have very fond memories of everybody I worked with. I just kind of grew out of it. Ω

Special thanks to David Walker

MAGS, ZINES & SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

ASIAN CULT CINEMA #43 (P.O. Box 16-1919, Miami, FL 33116; $30 for 6 issues, or $6 each). The newest dose of this essential 64-page Asian film digest overflows with photos, interviews and insightful analysis. It includes Q&A's with Korean actress Moon So-Ri (*Oasis*) and HK director Johnnie To (*The Heroic Trio*), plus critiques of Miike's *Dead or Alive* trilogy, *Battle Royale II*, Category III titles, and much more!

ASKEW REVIEWS 11 (Denis Sheehan, P.O. Box 684, Hanover, MA 02339; $3, w/checks made payable to Denis Sheehan). Packed with cool music, book and (primarily) movie reviews, this amusing text-heavy 36-page zine covers a wide range of material — including horror, exploitation, erotica, indie fare, and even some relatively mainstream releases — in addition to a handful of essays. You can also check them out on-line at: **www.askewreviews.com**.

CHILLER THEATRE #20 (P.O. Box 23, Rutherford, NJ 07070; $5.95 each; $23 for 4 issues). The latest edition of this glossy, 64-page, horror-themed mag is packed with amazing interviews! From high-profile names such as Keir Dullea, Sybil Danning, Steve Railsback, and *The Vampire Lovers*' Madeleine Smith, to more obscure — but equally fascinating — actors like Marilyn Nash (*Unknown World*) and Jan Merlin (*The Twilight People*). There's also a visit to Paris' most macabre hotspots, plus loads of cool 42nd St. Pete reviews! Highly recommended!

LIQUID CHEESE #12-13 (Dave Kosanke, 8123 West Margaret Lane, Franklin, WI 53132; $1 apiece to cover the postage). After a four year hiatus, Dave returns with two new editions of his cool 'n' sleazy 24-page Xerox-zine. Both contain his photo-packed visit to the 2004 NJ Fangoria Con, plus plenty of amusing movie, music and book reviews — covering all of the best things in life: horror, porn and even wrestling!

MICRO-FILM #6 (Jason Pankoke, Opteryx Press, P.O. Box 45, Campaign, IL 61824; $6 for a sample copy, $12 for 3 issues, with checks made payable to Jason Pankoke). Focusing on the wide world of truly independent (sadly, "non-commercial") cinema, the latest edition of this impressive 52-page mag is packed with insightful articles: Sam Jones' Wilco documentary, a dissection of *Bowling for Columbine*, an interview with Jeff Krulik, the Jerry Stiller cult-comedy *The Independent*, plus dozens of reviews. A passionate, intelligently-written publication that deserves any true film fanatic's support.

UNCUT #16 (Midnight Media, P.O. Box 211, Huntingdon, PE29 2WD, England). Focusing on "worldwide video weirdness," this glossy 56-page mag reviews a wide range of obscure cinematic dementia — from horror rarities such as *Haute Tension* and *Stacy*, to exploitation classics like *The Cycle Savages*. Filled with rare ad mats and photos, the latest also contains interviews with the late Gordon Mitchell and Long Island schlock-auteur Nathan Schiff! Check it out! Available at: **www.midnight-media.demon.co.uk**.

VIDEO / DVD DISTRIBUTORS

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EYE TV / INTRAVENOUS VIDEO, Tony Pradlik, 14 Fieldstone Dr. #348, Hartsdale, NY 10530. A wild catalog filled with low-sleaze, high-art and loads of outrageously-obscure music collections on dvd-r. **[http://members.aol.com/rcknrex]**

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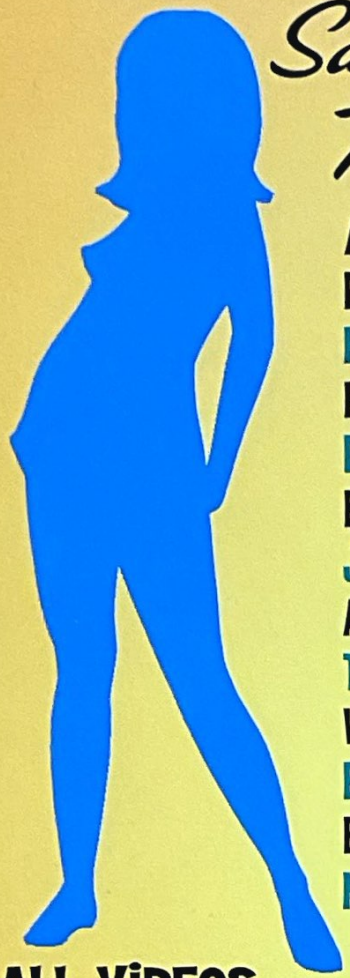

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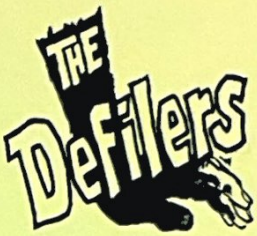

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